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ESSAY ON SUPERSTITION:

BEING AN INQUIRY INTO THE EFFECTS

OF

PHYSICAL INFLUENCE ON THE MIND,

IN THE PRODUCTION OF DREAMS, VISIONS, GHOSTS, AND
OTHER SUPERNATURAL APPEARANCES.

BY W. NEWNHAM, ESQ.

AUTHOR OF A TRIBUTE OF SYMPATHY, THE PRINCIPLES OF PHYSICAL,
INTELLECTUAL, MORAL AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION, &c. &c.

"And when they shall say unto you, seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards, that peep, and that mutter; should not a people seek unto their God? for the living, to the dead?—To the law and to the testimony:—If they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them,"—*Isaiah*, viii. 19, 20.

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THE LORD BISHOP OF WINCHESTER,

&c. &c. &c.

MY LORD,

Allow me to express my gratitude for your Lordship's permission to place the following pages under your protection; and for the kind interest with which you have noticed and facilitated their progress. Possessing the privilege of near access to your Lordship, and bound by far other ties than those which subsist between an Author and his Patron, a labour under



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PREFACE.

THE *subject* of the following pages was originally suggested to the Author, by a highly-valued friend, as one on which his pen might be usefully employed, in endeavouring to remove some of those misconceptions which *seem* to place the pursuits of the Christian, in opposition to the researches of science; a *spectral imagining*, which can alone maintain its supposed existence, so long as it can be invested with the undefined character that will be communicated by the darkness of ignorance, or by the twilight of information, but which must vanish before the full-born day of knowledge :—for Christianity and true science can

never be opposed;—and it may be fearlessly said, that the investigations of the latter, if conducted in a spirit of inquiry after truth, will *always* serve to *explain and confirm* the former; although they will also dissipate the mistakes of some of its most valuable professors.

The idea thus suggested to the Author was acted upon, and from this arose a series of communications to the “Christian Observer,” during the course of the past year. These Essays are now collected into one volume, and are presented to the Public, with various corrections, and additional illustrations, in the hope that they may prove acceptable to a larger class of readers; and that they may be useful in undermining the wall of prejudice, which has been just alluded to: their Author most sincerely and fervently prays, that they may prove the means of widening the agency of real religion, by contracting the limits of the prejudices against its influence.

It is perhaps a little extraordinary, that a work undertaken with this view, should have

been charged with a tendency to *infidelity*. Of late years, this term has been very commonly applied to all those who stepped out of the beaten track, in order to extend the boundary of present knowledge, and to inquire into the secret springs, by whose operation, certain phenomena were obtained, and certain results attended. Perhaps it might be well to inquire, how far the zeal which has prompted a charge of this general nature, was really the *offspring* of a *Christian spirit*, and how far it may have been the product of indulging a natural severity, and other peculiarities of character,—themselves at variance with that spirit, and in so far as this may have been the case, closely allied to infidelity. The effect of Christianity is one of meekness and forbearance—of tenderness and prudence:—may the Author and his friends, and those who differ from him, strive earnestly to drink more deeply into the spirit which was in our Lord Jesus Christ, and to imitate his most perfect example. For himself, he can only most solemnly appeal to the great Searcher of

hearts, that his simple object has been, to extend the influence of genuine Christianity, and the glory of Christ; and he humbly prays that such may be the result of the present inquiry; and if so, to God be all the praise!

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ESSAY ON SUPERSTITION.

CHAPTER I.

Introductory Remarks.

BEFORE inviting the attention of my readers to a series of illustrations on the manifold and varied forms in which the offspring of superstition cross our path, I must claim their indulgence should I sometimes impugn the truth of any long-cherished prejudices; and, especially, should I frequently refer to a *bodily cause, effects* which some of them may have attributed to a purely spiritual agency : and therefore I think it necessary to prefix to this inquiry, the principles upon which it is undertaken.

I. The cause of true religion always loses ground, in proportion as it is associated with any system of irrational belief.

II. The cause of true religion always gains an accession of influence, and obtains an extension of its benefits, in proportion as the faith of its disciples is supported by knowledge, enlightened by the torch of scientific research, and chastened by the delicacy of true taste.

III. The honour of God is vindicated, and the kingdom of Christ is enlarged; the faith of the humble and the sincere is confirmed; the prejudices of such as are satisfied with this world's wisdom are subdued; the fears of the ignorant are superseded; and the hope and confidence of the just are supported by being placed on a basis of scientific and rational explanation, rather than on the fears of ignorance, or on a measure of belief which was never designed for a revelation addressed to God's rational creatures.

It would contribute to the happiness and welfare of mankind, if the sincerely religious would condescend to be aided in their inquiries by the light of true science; and if scientific investigators would, in the conscious humility of Christian feeling, submit their feeble judgment to the guidance of the Holy Spirit: so that the highest knowledge might be adorned by the lesser, but not trifling, beauties of intellect; while the Colossus of literature might be

rendered estimable by subordinating his stores of wisdom to the promotion of genuine piety in himself and others.

These propositions require a little farther developement ; and *first*, the cause of true religion in the world always loses ground, in proportion as it is associated with any system of irrational belief. Reflection teaches us, that thus it must be ; for since revealed religion was designed for God's most perfect work, and as it was destined to restore man to the image of God, in order that he might show forth the glory of his Creator and Redeemer ; it is manifest that this object will be accomplished only in proportion as he resembles his Maker. And since perfect knowledge forms one of the attributes of the Divine character, his creatures will be like him in this respect, only as the clouds of ignorance have been chased away by the influence of the Holy Spirit, upon the exertion of those talents which man has received ; as the undefined forms of twilight are rendered visible in all their proportions by the result of increasing acquaintance ; as his hopes are enlarged by being placed on a firmer basis ; as his affections are invigorated by discoveries of the infinite care and goodness, and love of his Heavenly Father ; as his intellectual powers are

strengthened and matured by constant exercise on a wider and a more successful field of inquiry and observation ; and as he is enabled to explain phenomena, and account for circumstances which have been termed supernatural, and to know the wise and rational agency of that good Providence which upholds and governs all things by the word of the Divine power.

Experience confirms this award of reflection. Let us cast our eyes upon the Roman Catholic devotee ; let us look to his standard maxim of “ I believe, because it is incredible ; ” let us contemplate the homage which he offers to his priest,—not on the score of influence arising from superior sacredness of character,—from intellectual and moral worth, or in return for the instruction he receives ; for all these may be wanting : he may be grossly and openly profligate, profoundly ignorant, and wholly careless of the real wants of his flock ; yet homage, (might I not almost say *adoration* ?) is yielded to his ministerial character as a confessor, and as possessing the power of granting or withholding absolution, rescuing his supplicant from the torments of purgatory, or suffering him to experience its prolonged punishments. Let us advert to his belief in the power of the

priest to forgive sins, upon being paid for it, although it is declared that none can forgive sins except God alone; let us contemplate the catalogue of faults which includes murder, theft, adultery, and the like, as admitting of pecuniary atonement; nay, farther, let us estimate the prospective indulgence which may be obtained to commit sin in future, upon a scale proportioned to the wealth of the individuals; let us look to the mummerly of his religion, to its imposing ceremonial, and its dread of the circulation of the Bible; let us accurately weigh its favourite doctrine of *transubstantiation*, and of the real presence; its constant hostility to the diffusion of intellectual culture; its claim to infallibility for all its decisions, and its permanent substitution of a belief in the church for faith in Christ, and of penances and pilgrimages for holiness of life; and then let us see whether all the loveliness and spirituality, and almost all the influence of Christianity, be not lost by its degrading association with that which is irrational. Witness again the effect of this system upon the will and upon the intellect: man loses his free-agency and individual accountability; his mind is grasped by the terrors of superstition, as by a chain of adamant; he has no will but that of his priest, and no occa-

sion for the exercise of judgment, or of the other intellectual faculties ; he is fast bound by the thralldom of the most enthralling power ; his conscience is directed by the interest of his spiritual pastor, and the fear of his resentment, rather than the love of his Heavenly Father, and the desire of obedience to his commands. Effects, similar in kind to these, though not in degree, are produced wherever a spirit of Roman Catholicism is abroad throughout the world ; and under every possible disguise ; that is, whenever any thing short of the pure and simple evangelical piety of the Bible is substituted as the ground of hope, or the rule of conduct ; whenever any irrational attachment to forms and ceremonies is placed in the room of the worship of the Most High God.

If it were necessary to accumulate proofs of this position, they might readily be found in the system of religious belief of the Mohammedan—in the endless and sensual mythology of the Hindoo—or in the still less enlightened notions of the North American Indian ; all tending to show, that in proportion as man departs from that which is reasonable, he becomes the willing victim of ignorance, the debased slave of his passions, and still further and further

alienated from the God of his life ; experience thus affording the strongest confirmation of our position.

II. The cause of true religion always gains an accession of influence, and obtains an extension of its benefits, in proportion as the faith of its disciples is supported by knowledge, enlightened by the torch of scientific research, and chastened by the delicacy of true taste. Real Christianity always gains by inquiry : once get a man to think over his state, and the suitableness of religion to his wants ; once enlist his understanding in the pursuit, and let him be truly in earnest in asking what is his duty towards God and his neighbour ; and there is every hope for him. The great mischief is, that he will not think ; that he will not consider ; and that he will be contented with a few irrational services, placing these in the room of principled obedience.

Prejudice is diminished by the association of the understanding with religious belief. While the man of science and intellectual attainment can persuade himself that religion consists in a certain influence upon the passions and affections, exerted he knows not how, and by a mysterious agency, the very existence of which he almost hesitates to acknowledge, he considers

it only as the heritage of weak minds, and designed to govern the ignorant : but when he sees its doctrines embraced upon conviction, by individuals of whose intellectual capacity he can entertain no doubt ; and when he perceives that such minds are only energised in the pursuit of knowledge, and refined, and purified ; when the powers of the judgment are confessedly deepened, and the benevolent affections are expanded ; when argument is called in to the defence of their opinions, and all the resources of learning are placed in requisition to prove the reality, as well as the reasonable ground, of their convictions ;—he is assured that religion is not that contracting study which he once thought it, but that it possesses the power even of ennobling the mind ; and thus the veil of prejudice is blown aside, the film of visual delusion is dissipated, and at least the soil is prepared for the reception of Divine truth.

Again ; learning, and the majesty of cultivated mind, exert an astonishing influence over popular opinion, and must therefore add strength to the cause of Christianity, in proportion to the extent of such agency. And this will operate both in the way of precept and example : the opinion of the reputed wise is quoted by the majority of those who think not for them-

selves ; their powers of persuasion are very great ; and their example is bounded only by the extent to which it can be seen.

The employment of these talents and researches upon Biblical Criticism has not been thrown away ; many seeming incongruities have been explained ; many difficulties have been removed ; light has beamed upon that which was obscure ; the appearance of contradiction has been reconciled ; and the harmony of the Scriptures has been fully established : the objections of the infidel have been answered ; and while it has been allowed that there are mysteries in religion far beyond the comprehension of a finite capacity, it has also been shown that the same law attaches to all the productions of nature ; and precisely because the human mind, formed originally with capacities to comprehend the rationale of its own phenomena, has lost that power by the debasing influence to which it has been subjected. It has been shown, too, that the difficulties of infidelity involve an exercise of belief far greater than the mysteries of religion, and monstrous in proportion to the cheerless annihilation with which they are connected : the doubts of feeble and unconvinced but sincere inquirers have been chased away, like the sum-

mer's mist which has still lingered on the crest of our hills, till it has vanished before the light and heat of the full-born day: and the faith and hope, and love, and joy of the Christian have been deepened in their hold upon his heart, while they have expanded into all that is virtuous in principle, all that is pure and benevolent in feeling, all that is lovely and excellent in conduct.

Moreover, Christianity will derive an accession of strength from the delicacy of true taste: its influence upon the mind will be, to give it a more extensive hold upon the sympathies of others; while to the man of simple literary taste, it will come recommended and adorned with its genuine qualities, instead of being associated with that which is opposed to its real nature; and thus its agency will be extended both above and below, from the giant of literature to the least expanded intellect among the sincere and simple-hearted, the poor and illiterate. Besides, there will be developed a delicate perception, by which the finer shades of moral beauty will be seized and appropriated; an acquaintance with mind, and its powers and operations, will be widened; the removal of prejudice will unveil the wide field of mental research; all that is sublime

and beautiful in nature or in character will be doubly enjoyed ; there will be a permanent delight in cultivating the intellectual faculty, and in consecrating its powers to the service of Him from whom all blessings flow ; the substantial worth of the individual will be increased, while his capacity for usefulness, and his desire after it, will be augmented ; the productions of reason and intellect will be estimated aright, and will be tested, as they ought to be, by their title to the possession of moral beauty ; and this again will be referred, for its standard, to the character of highest value, even to Christ, who is the chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely.

III. But, thirdly, I have stated that the honour of God is vindicated, and the kingdom of Christ is enlarged ; the faith of the humble and sincere is confirmed ; the prejudices of those who are satisfied with this world's wisdom are subdued ; the fears of the ignorant are superseded ; and the hopes and confidence of the just are supported, by being placed on a basis of scientific and rational explanation, rather than on the fears of ignorance, or on a measure of belief which never was designed for a revelation addressed to God's rational creatures.

Christianity is not a religion of mere feeling and passion : for, although it should come from the heart, it must be based on the understanding, and be supported by the intellect ; otherwise its clear and steady light will be exchanged for the transient meteor of exhalation on the one hand, or the frost of indifference on the other. The glow of enthusiasm, or the chill of carelessness ; the fever of passion, or the collapse of scepticism, will characterise the manifestations of a mind which has embraced its truths but in part, and has, perhaps, embraced them with the narrow views of sectarian influence. Besides, a little acquaintance with the intellectual nature of man will prove that he was originally designed for much greater attainments than are now within his grasp ; and will show that some perverting agency has passed upon him, has circumscribed his knowledge, placed a limit everywhere to his researches, converted that which was once good into that which has an evil tendency, and made him what he now is, the willing slave of sin, instead of what he ought to be, the obedient servant of Christ. And if this state of things cannot be accounted for upon any *known principle*, it is surely not irrational to take the account which revelation gives of this sad change. And, if our

conviction of this first and fundamental truth of revelation be thus confirmed, our faith in its remaining doctrines acquires a firmer basis. For faith, which is the gift of God, must be based upon the conviction of want in the dependent, and of power, and knowledge, and goodness, in the Giver; and it must be supported by the understanding, or it will wither away, before the sophistries of the designing. Besides, the moral responsibility and free agency of man, his power to choose the good, and refuse the evil; and his loss of that power, in consequence of the gloomy inheritance bequeathed him from this first fall, and now prolonged to successive generations, derives support from the phenomena of mental manifestation and brainular peculiarity.

The original character of the faculty of volition may be still descried through its mournfully altered phenomena: man's knowledge of good, and his conviction of truth, his preference of evil, and his choice of error, are stamped in undeniable characters upon his mental operations, and plainly indicate the necessity of *some change*, in order to convert the manifestations of his degraded temperament into the offspring of truth, and justice, and righteousness; and thus also confirm the doctrine of a necessity for

the influence of the Holy Spirit, to renew that nature, to change that heart, to subdue that rebellious will, to enlarge that contracted understanding, and to place its renovated feelings, and views, and principles, on another and a firmer basis, even the *Rock of Ages*. Yet, if this be true, it is clear that man is now in a state of imperfection; and still equally clear that the constitution of his nature must have originally destined him for a state of *perfection*. Man's immortal spirit is encumbered and imprisoned in its material tenement, which is destined, in a few short years, to lose its beauty, and to crumble into dust. *Here*, then, he is tending to decay; and therefore, if there be a state of *perfection* anywhere, it cannot be on earth. But he possesses within himself a consciousness of continued existence. It is reasonable to conclude that perfection must be hereafter: and we now see him placed in a period of probation, during which, his powers are to be refined; and he is to be daily striving forward, after that nearer and still nearer approach to a perfect state, which is only attainable, as it is revealed to us, when mortality shall be swallowed up of life, when the soul shall escape the burden of materiality, and when disenchanted from the thralldom of ignorance

and vice, and released from the prison of the body, it shall know all things ; when it shall be clothed in the robe of its Redeemer's righteousness, and it shall be holy, even as *He is holy.*

But, further, this being admitted, it is madness to rest satisfied with the possession of any measure of *present wisdom.* For if the original tendency of the human mind be the pursuit after perfection ; and if any point of improvement be a step gained in advance towards this state ; and if the acquisition of every fresh portion of knowledge be not only a triumph over ignorance, but a source of strength for the future useful application of mental power ; and if the value of knowledge be estimated only by the end which it proposes, and by the means of its accomplishment, it is clear, that that wisdom which relates to a small section of man's existence, can only be valuable in proportion as it adds to his capacity for enjoying, and his means of obtaining, that eventual good which will constitute his happiness throughout futurity ; and therefore, that every attainable portion of science should be earnestly desired, and should be employed directly or indirectly in seeking after that perfection which alone can thoroughly satisfy the heart that has been renewed by

the Spirit of grace ; since none but a Divine sanction can fully calm its fears, or expand the bosom with hope and confidence, or joy and love : nought but this can constitute the active Christian, the burning and shining light, during the darkness and the doubt which attach to his material existence.

The doctrine of Providence, the bountiful care of the Almighty Creator, the harmony which pervades all his works, the beneficence which marks his designs, and the wonderful provision which has been made for all the emergencies of life, are explained and defined by the researches of natural philosophy ; and thus phenomena which impressed the mind with fear, when ignorant of their cause, become sources of adoring gratitude, and motives to obedience when explained. Every hour of man's eventful history affords a convincing proof of his dependence, and of the divinity of that power, which, unseen sustains and governs all things with inconceivable benevolence. The light of science will exhibit this truth in a thousand every-day forms, and will prove how minutely and literally we live, and move, and have our being, through this Almighty agency. But if so, we are prepared to receive the revelation of God as the moral Governor of the

universe, entitled to man's obedience, and enacting those paternal laws, the infringement of which must be followed by certain punishment, or by pardon proceeding upon a principle which can reconcile perfect holiness with perfect love. The obligations of a child to an earthly parent admit not of comparison with those of man to his Creator; yet the former enacts laws, and requires implicit obedience to their spirit, punishes for their infraction, and only forgives upon submission of the offender, making a fancied atonement for error, and promising to do his will in future. But God, who is perfect holiness, can only forgive iniquity which has been atoned for; and since man has no power of his own to expiate sin, to obtain forgiveness for the past or strength for the time to come, a sacrifice has been provided, by which the harmony of the Divine attributes may be sustained, and God may be just, and manifest his hatred to sin, and yet be gracious to sinners, receiving to his favour all such as accept the proffered salvation, through faith in Christ, and obedience unto life. Nor is there any thing incredible in this provision; for, reasoning from the analogies of the physical creation, if God has wisely ordained a certain proportion of atmospherical air to sustain natural life; and if the slightest

difference in the proportion of its constituent atoms occasion distress ; and if the air we have breathed be contaminated, and rendered unfit to sustain animal life ; and still more, if this air be peculiarly fitted for the support and nourishment of plants, which thus consume what man has impoverished, and again breathe it out purified and renewed : or if it has been wisely provided, that water, in assuming the form of ice, should become specifically lighter than in its pristine state, in order to prevent the devastating consequences of those inundations which must ensue, were the contrary the case ; why, if this minute care (and the instances might be indefinitely multiplied) be taken of man's welfare (and science demonstrates that it *is* taken), can there be any thing incredible in the supposition, that at least equal care should have been taken of his moral, but contaminated nature, or that some provision should have been reserved, to rescue him from the devastations of sin, which come in like a flood ? And can there be any thing less reasonable, less worthy of attention and of belief, in the provision which has been made in the sacrifice of Christ, for the latter instance,—recurring to the above-mentioned physical facts,—than in the effect produced upon air by the respiration of plants, or on the

specific gravity of water by the change of configuration in its particles on their becoming ice?

Surely, then, my first propositions have been fully demonstrated; surely, we need not be afraid of considering reason and science as the handmaids of religion; or of seeking for an explanation of forms of being with which we are unacquainted, without at once referring them to a purely mysterious and spiritual agency. There is sometimes exhibited a fear of tracing effects to their causes, and of investigating the successive links of action and impression, lest we should look to second causes only, and rest in these, forgetting the Great First Cause. But this fear arises from erroneous conception. When we look to the government of God, and endeavour to trace in our view its immensity, and its moral attributes, we can only refer such agency to an infinite mind, and can form no comprehensible idea of its operation; but when we look to this government as presiding everywhere, and as acting through the use of means which have been provided, and which scientific research enables us to understand, we can then form some idea of this wonder-working agency, in some infinitesimal portion of creation: and by the infinite

multiplication of this sustaining power, our views of its grandeur, and goodness, and all-pervading influence and love, are immensely increased; the rational mind is expanded, where feeling or prejudice would before have operated; and the conviction which results is of a far firmer and longer and more enduring quality, as well as more universally operative. God is everywhere: we *acknowledge* it as an abstract truth, or as a matter of faith: but when we *trace* his footsteps, we *see* and *know* it. The only evil attending this investigation consists in the possibility of forgetting his primary agency; but this will be never realized where such research is undertaken with a view to *his glory*, and with a simple desire to be led into *all* truth. May God Almighty bless the present attempt to explain phenomena, which to many may appear inexplicable, and to show that *He is a God of order*, working by the agency of means, to the perversion, or diseased or morbid application of which by sinful man, can alone be referred those deviations from consistency, which have often been ascribed to purely spiritual agency; but which really do, for the most part, own a bodily origin.

CHAPTER II.

Division of the Subject.—Of Superstition in general.—Its essential character.—Its Varieties.—Its Causes.

IN proceeding with the subject, it will be necessary to consider superstition in general, which will lead me to a notice of its causes; and, among others, that which arises from the influence of irritated brain.—The writer's views on this subject will oblige him to glance at the cerebral functions in a state of health, and under the operation of morbid action; after which his hypothesis will be applied to account for various presumed supernatural appearances and influences,—to dreams, visions, ghosts, and other kindred matters.

I. Of superstition in general.

The essence of superstition consists in the belief of the existence of *some supernatural power*; not, however, the agency of the God of

the Christian revelation—a Being of infinite purity and holiness, of unsearchable wisdom, of boundless mercy, and goodness, and love ;—a God of order, requiring the obedience of the understanding and of the heart to laws which are framed by infinite knowledge of the delusions of the former, and of the aberrations of the latter ; the object of the hope, the confidence, the affection of his creatures—dwelling with the humble and the contrite—preserving all things by the word of his power, and especially extending his protection to those who love and serve him : but a power, the character of which is mischievous, its attributes unknown, not founded on reason, inimical to science, unacknowledged by revelation, opposed to the happiness of man, introducing disorder into the mental functions and moral conduct, submitting the understanding and the heart to a blind and irrational impulse, prompting to evil, or paralyzing the power of doing well, and leading to distrust in the providence of God, and to disbelief of his promises. Exactly in proportion as real religion raises the tone of moral feeling, and stimulates the desire after intellectual attainment, superstition degrades the former and destroys the latter. The character of man as a moral and intellectual being is exalted and

improved by the influence of religion, because he justly estimates its precepts and doctrines as the offspring of truth, the handmaid of science, the nurse of intellectual progress, the great source of mental action and passion, the regulator of the desires, and consequently as affording the means of happiness in the sunshine of prosperity, as well as of hope, of peace, and of consolation under the cloud of adversity; the only source of correct conduct, because it is the only system of morals which reaches to the thoughts, and feelings, and motives; and because none but a Divine sanction can renew the heart, or subdue the rebellious will, change the course of natural passion, substitute the love of God for self-love, or implant the desire of obedience to his will, in the room of that treasonable pursuit of independent existence, which is the spontaneous fruit of practical atheism.

It is under such an influence that man, civilized man, cultivates his faculties, and should devote them to God who gave them. He finds, indeed, a *natural* barrier placed to his researches; but he does not with his own hands construct an artificial impediment to his progress: he busily employs his talents, and, under the influence of the Spirit of God, he every where thirsts after the perfection of knowledge,

and power, and action ; and is arrested only by the insuperable difficulty just mentioned, and beyond which it would be the merest presumption to attempt to pass : he acknowledges the feebleness of his reasoning powers, but he directs his inquiries into every proper channel ; and with a chastised imagination, endeavours to form an acquaintance with the causes of the phenomena which surround him, so far as these have been placed within his reach.

But how different is this portrait from that of the heart and soul of man under the agency of debasing superstition ! He has no longer to think for himself, or to seek the guidance of a merciful God in his researches. The powers of his reason are laid aside, to make room for a nameless impulse, under the influence of which his mind takes a peculiar form : its manifestations assume the tinge of this prevailing bias ; the power of the will, the ability to choose good and to refuse evil, is converted into the desire of warding off some dreaded misfortune : the mind is clouded by prejudice ; its credulity is that of the blind man who fears all that he is told by those who are interested in keeping him from advancing ; and religion itself is blamed for that which owes its origin exclusively to the *want of this principle.*

Superstition assails us in a number of forms, which however may be all traced to the same cause. Thus, for instance, we have a variety of signs, and portents, and warnings of death, or misfortune,—more indeed than it would be easy to enumerate,—beginning with the equality or inequality of numbers, or the mode of the flight of birds, and terminating with the winding-sheet on our candles, or the peculiar howling of the midnight dog under our window. So, again, from the same principle, fear is developed in darkness, or during the exhibition of any natural unexplained phenomena ; an eclipse has sown terror in the hearts of millions ; the power of unknown evil rests upon the sable wing of midnight ; the *spirit of the storm is heard* in that peculiar agitation of the atmosphere which precedes its immediate approach ; the thunder of the summer cloud has been considered as the warfare of the spirits of the air ; and even at the present day, and in this Christian country, it is very frequently deprecated as an object of apprehension, instead of being gratefully received as the source of great good ; and as the appointed means of expressing the eternal unchanging benevolence of the Almighty to his ungrateful creatures, rather than as an indication of his anger.

We are next assailed with a long list of tales of *supernatural appearances*, of sudden lights, and peculiar forms, of ghosts, and sundry other matters ; and these have not only constituted a ground of unnecessary alarm, but have even formed a basis for precaution, for suspicion, for unjust, or injurious, or absurd action : and thus some ocular spectra, the offspring of a diseased brain, have become motives for *conduct* ; and, still worse, this very conduct, which is a remote consequence of *disobedience* to God, is made to assume the appearance of doing the immediate will of Him who is infinitely wise and holy.

Another demonstration of the same principle is to be found in the history of certain revelations and impressions, producing a very considerable influence upon the modes of thought, and habits of action. An idea, and very frequently an insane idea, depending upon some recollected image, whose law of association we may perhaps be *unable to trace*, is invested with an attribute of *sanctity*, as being the *immediate suggestion of Him* who constantly watches over his creatures. In a mind predisposed to superstition, this idea gains so great an influence over the attention, that it presently engages it exclusively ; and the *patient* has now approached the

confines of that undefined territory, in which he will range lawlessly, from an impression that he is acting under the immediate agency and guidance, sanction and direction, of that Being, with whom originated, as he verily believes, the early delusive impression, that formed the first link in this chain of deviation from healthy function.

A variety of the same tyrant principle may be observed in ascribing the operation of natural bad passion to direct satanic influence; by which means persons sometimes excuse their misconduct on the plea of not acting from the will, but under the resistless impulse of a power of evil superior (by the supposition) to the highest effort of that will. I am aware of what the Scriptures of truth teach us respecting the existence and the agency of that spiritual enemy, who goeth about seeking whom he may devour: but the worst that he can do against us is in the way of evil suggestions, adapted to our corrupt propensities. The Creator has endued him with no active power over us; he cannot operate upon us except through the medium of our own will; but persons are often better pleased to throw the blame of that which is evil in their hearts upon the influence of Satan, than upon their own indulgence of

sinful passion and corrupt propensity ; as if the facility with which they fall into the snare of the devil, and are taken captive by him, did not equally prove that permanent tendency to wrong which showed that the heart was deceitful and desperately wicked. What is commonly called (and very frequently is) temptation, is often ascribed to this especial agency, when it really consists in the aptitude of the mind for certain evil modes of action, which are embraced when presented to it, because there exists a corresponding feeling, a principle from within, harmoniously combining with every outward action of a similar character.

Another step in advance, and we meet the whole tribe of dreams, visions, reveries, and the like,—frequently the offspring of recollected impressions disjoined from their original trains of association ; or resulting from a bad habit of indulging the love of mental wandering without guidance, or fixed rule, or definite object ; or depending upon the organ of mind, variously irritated by immediate or intermediate connexion or sympathy with the morbid action of such other organ of the body as may happen to form *the nucleus* of that preponderating disorder of function which overturns the balance of health.

Next appears for consideration the lengthened

train of vulgar prophecies.—We need not go beyond the instance of Johanna Southcote, to perceive that there is no folly so great but that it will find a corresponding trait of imbecility in the character of many with which it readily assimilates ; and if this *future* should happen to possess a pretended association with religion, the dupe of the designing, or of the infatuated and misled, may become the disciple, or the founder ; of a new sect, a zealous partizan of its views, a devotee to his newly-formed opinions, and a worshipper at the altar he has erected ; he receives the seal of his safety, and becomes the fully-formed enthusiast.

One step more in the descending scale of credulity, and we meet with a belief in the performance of vulgar miracles : as if the Author of nature would permit his laws to be interrupted, except to prove his own Divinity, to show that His is the creative power, that this power is superior to the laws of the universe, and that therefore *he is God*. Of the claims to miraculous agency in these latter days, the history of animal magnetism may be referred entirely to a well-timed employment of certain known physical laws on the part of the designing magnetizer, and to the influence of an exalted imagination under such physical agency on the part

of the magnetized. The sacred advantages arising from the possession of the Holy Scapular,* may be adjusted, partly by the selfish and avaricious influence of a crafty priesthood—partly by the falsehood of the narrative—and partly by purely physical and mechanical agency. The existence of Anne Moore without taking any sustenance, has been satisfactorily traced to imposture; and the astonishing cures of Prince Hohenlohe, if authentic, are to be explained upon the principle of unlimited credence, producing such an effect upon the animal fibre as to suspend for a time the morbid action which was previously going on; and which, in certain constitutions, might then be entirely superseded by the commencement of a new train of healthy associations. The same explanation will apply to the agency of charms in dispelling the returns of ague, and other in-

* Some of my readers may not be aware that the Holy Scapular is supposed to be in imitation of a portion of the dress of the Virgin Mary, which, having been consecrated by the priest and *sold to the people*, will defend the purchaser and wearer from many imminent dangers, from death in a thousand forms, and from various other evils. The history of the Holy Scapular forms an interesting and valuable monument of the influence of a secular priesthood, and of the degradation of human nature, by which it is placed in a situation for believing such monstrous absurdities, and for revering, nay adoring their authors!

termittent irritations depending upon a law of the nervous system, by which a certain periodicity of action is observed ; and the same functions, whether healthy or diseased, commence at similar hours, and are continued by habit, and by the persistence of similar conditions.

To this enumeration may be added, lastly, the whole system of dupery, involved by the mystic science of astrology, and its pigmy offspring—divination, casting nativities, and fortune-telling. The influence of this latter form of superstition upon the mind, is very considerable ; and even at the present hour exerts an agency, far greater than could be believed by those who contemplate the barefaced knavery which it involves, had it not been actually traced by others who have obtained extensive opportunities of observation ; aye, and this agency is exerted even upon those whose minds by education and situation ought to have been exempted from this grossest fanaticism. Now all these several forms of superstition may be referred to one or more of the following causes.

I. The most fruitful source of superstition, and indeed that which characterises every other cause, is the belief of that which is false, or contrary to reason and revelation, as regards the agency of a Divine power. The God of

the Christian is a being of infinite mercy and love; his compassion is unbounded; he pities the wanderings of his creatures; he is slow to anger; his knowledge, his wisdom, and his power, are equalled only by his benevolence and tenderness. And although his children have broken his laws, forgotten his precepts, and incurred the penalties due to their disobedience, he is anxious to receive them back to his favour; he waits to be gracious; he will be found of those who seek him; he will blot out their iniquities, and will no more remember their transgressions, but will be reconciled to them through the sacrifice of Christ; and they shall become his people, and walk in his ways, and love and serve and fear him.

Not so the divinity of superstition, or false religion. The prominent attribute of every such form of worship, is that of an irrevocable fatalism: the decree has passed, and cannot be altered; infinite knowledge is exchanged for predetermination of the will, which nought can change; the justice of a pure and Holy Being is supplanted by the capricious declaration of a changing mortal; the smile of pity is superseded by the frown of vengeance; the anger of Him, who "willeth not the death of a sinner," but rather that "he turn unto Him and live;"

who “deferreth his anger,” who “suffereth long, and is kind,” is exchanged for the vindictive exultation of one who *rejoices* to punish sin, who glorifies himself in the weakness and frailties of mankind, and who is honoured by the deepening crimes of those who shall ultimately receive his proffered grace. From these false views will result fear and dread, not reverence and love. The desire of averting the wrath of God will usurp the place of a wish to serve, obey, and please him ; his moral attributes will be misrepresented ; it will be supposed, that He, who is above all human frailty, may be influenced by passion ; and this error will be augmented and perpetuated by the influence of our own natural feelings and emotions, and by a conviction of our feebleness, contrasted with the power of Him with whom, *under such circumstances*, we must have to *contend*. This fallacious view necessarily leads to absurd opinions, and to acts of worship, or ridiculous ceremonies, to avert the anger or propitiate the goodness of Him who ruleth in the heavens, but who is an object of terror only to the finally impenitent. A considerate review of this first cause of superstition will show how important it is to form sound and rational, that is, true

and scriptural, views on the subject, and will lead us to notice,

2. *Ignorance*, as another fertile source of these false impressions. This cause, in producing its effect, will operate both upon the physical and the mental system. The former mode of causation will be presently considered, when we come to speak of the peculiar influence of different states of the brain ; we shall in this place, therefore, only remark the moral effects of this absence of knowledge. By it, the sphere of intellectual vision is contracted, the spirit of inquiry is arrested, the genius of truth is enthralled by a fatal lethargy which it cannot dissipate, and the phantoms which arise from its uneasy slumbers, are at once the offspring and the nurse of superstition. The ignorant man looks at nature with a gaze of wonder, which is easily converted into awe : for an essential ingredient in many of her most sublime phenomena, is a certain portion of terror, so chastised by an acquaintance with their rationale, as to become a source of pleasure : but so terrible when unexplained, as to afford ground for superstitious reverence, instead of rational admiration and adoring gratitude. And when the mind has been brought

into this state, the gradation is most easy, by which it insensibly glides into the habit of ascribing all these natural grand spectacles to the immediate and special agency of a superior being, of whose character the only idea which it forms is derived from the terror by which it has been inspired, and in consequence of which it partakes largely of the false and injurious notions which we have just contemplated as a principal cause of this dangerous tendency.

If to this want of knowledge of the laws of the universe, be added ignorance of the moral attributes of Him, "who rides upon the whirlwind, and manages the storm," we have the mind at once subjected to the fully-formed agency of superstition. The history of mankind will corroborate this conclusion; for we perceive the greater or less influence of this principle, exactly in proportion as the human mind is expanded by the glow of intelligence, or withered and contracted by the blast of desolation, by that destitution of information which will leave man in the gloomy night into which sin had originally plunged him. Thus, in the earlier stages of society, and in situations to which the light of science has not yet extended its awakening beams, this principle is most prominent; and in the more civilized and

intelligent quarters of the globe, it is found to prevail particularly among weak and uncultivated minds, and it is dissipated in proportion as education and principle make their way. *These* have disenchanted many a hamlet of its popular legend: the ghosts and fairies of former times, which have claimed the privilege of nightly visitation, have been exorcised by its rays, and have fled before the breath of morning air; and the ignorant worship of the “unknown God” has been exchanged for devotion of the heart to the service of Him, “who is not far from every one of us; for in Him we live, and move, and have our being.” Again, this influence is more particularly visible in females; and how is this to be explained, but *partly* by supposing that *they* are not so much in the habit of investigating the laws of nature, and of reasoning upon them, so that they are more subjected to this general agency; and *principally*, from that increased susceptibility of the nervous system, which belongs to their peculiar physical temperament, and which has been fostered by their modes and habits of life, by indulgence, and by the absence of that seasonable control which alone can discipline the mind into obedience to principle and reason? This cause will be again noticed, and will then

serve to explain another seeming anomaly; namely, that though superstition is the offspring, the inheritance, and the mark of a weak mind, yet it will sometimes be found to exist in men of great genius, and of enlightened intelligence.

3. *Fear* is another cause of superstition; whether it may arise from a bodily source of irritation, disturbing the equilibrium of brainular function, from ignorance, from erroneous views of the power and government of the Supreme, or from a consciousness of that moral delinquency, which indeed *would* afford ground for hopeless fear, had not a remedy been provided in the “balm of Gilead,” the Saviour of the world. None can doubt, that according to his physical temperament, one man will be more or less impressible by fear, and will manifest more or less of courage, than another. This is visible in the inferior animals; it is observable in children; it is readily distinguishable in the adult, and it will cleave to manhood, even through life. This natural tendency may be increased by some peculiar morbid states of the cerebral function, which tend to throw the ordinary associations into confusion; it may be encouraged by a weak, or repressed by a judicious education; it will be rapidly brought into

action, by the agency of false views of religion ; and, finally, under that merciful dispensation which has been revealed to us, unless we can contemplate God as reconciled in the person and sacrifice of Christ, guilt makes cowards of us all : we fear we know not what, because we instinctively dread lest every unknown agent may prove a messenger from that last enemy which will convey us to a final, unexplored state of existence, of whose terrors we can form no adequate conception, though we do know that it has been declared, “ There is no peace to the wicked.” We deprecate an evil of whose extent we are ignorant, and we seek to avert it by any superstitious forms of devotion which we can imagine in the vanity and frowardness of the natural heart, unless we are led by the Spirit of God to come simply and humbly to the cross of Christ, and to ask of him grace and strength to do his will ; and that perfect love which “ casteth out fear, because fear hath torment.”

4. *Coincidence*. may be mentioned as another fruitful source of superstitious observance. Upon this principle may be explained the currency that has been given to certain warnings and tokens, with the circumstances of which we are liberally obtested, as having, of

necessity, preceded some great misfortune, when that misfortune has actually occurred, but which are overlooked and forgotten in the thousand instances in which no such predicted calamities have followed. It is very possible, that certain events may have occurred in such an order as to have become associated in idea, as a regular matter of sequence; in fact, as cause and effect; and yet, that the two might be wholly independent of each other, except by some whimsical affinities, or, still more frequently, by the simple accident of having occurred at the same season.

5. Another source of superstition is *fraud and hypocrisy*. The love of power and influence is so natural, and reigns so universally, that both will be sought after in every possible way; and they to whom nature and providence have not given the means of exerting such power, and who do not possess principle sufficient to induce them to employ their talents exclusively in promoting the good of those around them, or even to restrain them from seeking an extension of such influence by *any* means within their grasp, will avail themselves of the frailties and follies of their neighbour, and of all the weak points of his character, for this purpose; and man will become the easy

dupe of the designing and the unprincipled ; and all this from the mere love of influence in general, and of the consequence which it involves. This same principle will admit of extension, and will receive a particular and determined bias, when there is any local interest to serve, any boon to obtain, any duty to deprecate, any private object to accomplish. The faculties of the hypocrite will be quickened by selfish association ; and all the secret practices of knavery will be brought into action, in order to keep up a certain effect, and to conceal a successful fraud.

6. The influence of the *Imagination*, in producing unreal images, must not be forgotten in this enumeration of the sources of superstition. This faculty was a two-fold agency ; first, in its *natural* condition, in which, if uncontrolled, it has the power of creating images, and, from indulgence of these airy nothings, of believing them to be faithful portraits of realities ; and, secondly, when under the influence of its diseased impressions, it claims a supremacy over every other faculty, and will insist upon the prevalence of its manifestations. With regard to the former, one of the most common modes of its exhibition is that form of reverie which is entitled castle-building ; in the course of which

the mind invents for itself a certain possible situation, and then invests it with appropriate characters, till, under many circumstances, it is quite absorbed by the *idea*, which then haunts its waking and its sleeping moments, and becomes onerous from its obtrusiveness. There are very few who have not occasionally given the reins to this busy faculty, and who will not acknowledge the vividness, intensity, and vraisemblance with which all objects appear, so that it may be difficult to persuade them that they are not real.

Another evidence of the common operation of this faculty with which the mind embodies for itself various figures, is easily obtained ; as, for instance, when we intently watch the slow progress of ignition in our fires, or the peculiar shapes of clouds, or the undefined forms of moonlight, or the fantastic appearances assumed by the driven snow. In all these instances, there is a creation of spectra, and, by going a certain number of steps further, under the influence of a morbid imagination, a person may even imagine them moral or spiritual agents, and invest them with appropriate attributes, which, because their qualities are unknown, will develop fear, give rise to credulity, and to

that firm belief in their existence, and their power, which is not easily dissipated. The absurd fables of mythology may assist to show that I have not overstated my position.

A further illustration of the same principle, is to be found in the aptitude with which we invent actors for specific scenes; and, not contented with considering them as abstractions, we think and speak of them as persons,—nay more, as particular individuals; and we imagine their form, and feature, and expression. It is by this property that we fabricate for ourselves an idea of persons we have never seen, but which we consider as appropriate to certain characters, and as expressive of certain habits and modes of action. Nor does this process terminate with the simple ascription of form and feature, to action and progression: for, by the law of association, these primary forms are connected with other forms; and from these again are reproduced images of which we do not recollect the germs and first impressions, because their fantastic grouping has given them an air of novelty which dissociates them from their original stocks, and occasions them to be considered as creations arising from a power extrinsic to the mind

itself. This fruitful source of many of the forms of supernatural appearance, must not be forgotten.

But there is yet another property of the imagination, by which it not only invents persons and situations, in due subordination to some fancied or rational arrangement, but also invests them with attributes which they *do not* possess, and then draws conclusions as real, which the circumstances of the case would not admit even as rationally conjectural. Commonly too, it takes care that these should be attributes of fearful interest ; for it delights to exert a tormenting influence over the other mental manifestations, and to divert them from the steady pursuit of truth.

These creations of the fancy will be characterised by the situation of the individual ; and by the degree in which education has developed his intellectual powers, the closeness with which he has been accustomed to reason, and the extent to which he has disciplined his mind to believe only that which is real ; I mean not, that which is supported exclusively by the evidence of one or more of his senses, or which admits of demonstration ; but that which is founded on sound principle, and is consistent with reason, that which rests on unbiassed and

unprejudiced human testimony, or that which is based on Divine revelation. Moreover, these imaginative musings will be influenced by the particular state of the brain, and will take a cheerful or a melancholy tinge, accordingly as that organ may have been roused by determination of blood to its vessels, or as it may have been depressed by congestion, or by the agency of fear and disappointment. Again, as it may have been strengthened by use, and expanded by acquisition, or enfeebled by indolence, and shrivelled by narrow-mindedness; and still farther, as it may have been influenced by an undue excitement of its own, or by that of some neighbouring or associated viscus, its creations will partake of gloom and distress, or of cheerfulness and enthusiasm. These, however, are only natural productions; but there are many morbid conditions which will more readily be classed under the last source of superstition; namely,

7. The influence exerted *by the brain in its physiological and pathological states: brainular irritation of any kind, which in certain cases may border very nearly on insanity; the approach of disease; the return of convalescence; protracted wakefulness; too long indulged sleep; and a variety of other agents, differing in their degree,*

but all agreeing in one principle, that of exerting a certain baneful influence upon the organ of mind. Most of the causes of superstition which I have just enumerated, tend also to *produce* this effect upon the brain: for it must be remembered that every *mental* impression occasions also a certain movement of *the organ* through which that impression is transmitted, or is simply rendered cognizable; and that by this combined agency is promoted a condition of that viscus peculiarly favourable to the development of superstitiousi mages. Thus, for instance, erroneous views on the subject of religion place the spiritual principle in a situation liable to be acted upon easily by impressions of fearful interest; but, on the other hand, the influence which *these* exert upon *the brain*, also predisposes that organ to a similar action—renders it susceptible of the like impressions—and induces a state of irritability, during the continuance of which, itself is very much inclined to create these unreal phantasms by a certain peculiar licence of its own.

Again, ignorance has a two-fold influence: first, by withholding truth from the mental contemplation; and next, by withdrawing the aptitude for correct thought from the brainular organ. Its function remains undeveloped, and

its capacity for action is diminished, the evils of indolence and bad habit rest upon it; it becomes more completely the organ of the animal nature, and more abstracted from spiritual influence; its mental operations are all inadequately performed; it is unaccustomed to correct discipline, and hence becomes accessible to impulse: erroneous impressions find a ready access where there is no countervailing strength of truth; irritability is accumulated from the absence of a due proportion of employment, and therefore it is liable to those inordinate excitements and depressions which are common to *any* and *every* other organ, whose exercise and repose are not nicely balanced; but which are *peculiarly* operative upon the brain, because it is the centre of the nervous or sensitive system.

Fear, the coincidence of events, the creations of fraud, and the agency of imagination, will all be found to exert a similar power upon the mind and its organ, placing it in that peculiar state in which it is ready to be acted upon by slight intangible trains of association, calling up images of superstitious importance; or in which, by its wayward operations, it develops creations peculiarly its own, and is unable to distinguish between them and real impressions. This effect

may have been greatly augmented by early habit, resulting from the influence of ghost stories, and other nursery tales ; producing at the time such a powerful impression upon the brain, as to leave behind them ever afterwards a susceptibility to their re-development, which no time will remove, and no subsequent reasoning can eradicate. For the moment the man of cultivated intellect yields all the powers of his enlightened judgment to the indulgence of unreal phantasms, because he cannot control or supersede that vivid impression which was *first* made upon the sensorial organ, and which still claims a superiority over his better principles and feelings. Let this teach us to *pity*, not to blame or ridicule, those who have been unable to escape from shackles thus thoughtlessly or wickedly imposed ; and let it operate as a stimulus to others who feel this agency, to rise from the thralldom of its oppression, and, by a successful exertion of principle, to shake off the manacles of early brainular impression.

But if all this be true, we are prepared to understand how *any* disturbance of the cerebral function may overturn the balance of healthy action, and produce the diseased state in question ; we can comprehend that the deepening shades of mental alienation will give energy to

this morbid state, by depressing further and further the scale of health ; we can appreciate the influence exerted upon every portion of the nervous system, by the *first* impression of disease, or by the substitution of the new train of healthy actions in the period of convalescence, when the links of morbid association have been only just broken through ; we can allow the influence exerted upon this organ by the distant sympathetic irritation of any other function of the body in a state of suffering, or of any particular article of diet or medicine ; we can estimate the agency of long vigilance, producing susceptibility to impression of every kind ; or of too much sleep giving rise to hebetude of the intellectual power, and a disposition to erroneous spontaneous action, rather than remain subjected to the *morbid state of no action at all* ; and we can trace in all these several states a peculiar deviation from health on the part of the brainular organ : which *peculiarity* therefore *probably forms the proximate cause for the development, belief, and indulgence* of all the several forms of superstition. This is the proposition, on which mainly rests the object of these essays ; and it will be necessary to develop it at some length. *The great source of mistake consists in forgetting the materiality of*

the brain, and its consequent liability to be acted upon by physical causes. The writer distinctly avows it as his belief, that *supernatural appearances do actually depend upon a peculiar condition of the brain, in consequence of which that organ has escaped the control of the presiding mind, and continues to act without direction or guidance :* but before we can apply this proposition to the several forms of superstitious manifestation, we must consider at some length the functions of the brain, in a state of health and of disease.

CHAPTER III.

Materiality of the Brain, and its subjection to the agency of physical causes.—It is the organ of mind, and will influence its manifestations.—It is liable to morbid action, according to the *particular organ* in a state of irritation :—proofs of this position, arising out of simple, and morbid, and sympathetic excitement of the brain.

It was stated in the last chapter, that the various phenomena of superstition, and especially alleged supernatural appearances, depend upon a morbid condition of the brain, in consequence of which it has escaped the due control of the presiding mind. In order to apply this proposition to the several forms of superstitious manifestation, it is necessary to describe the functions of the brain in a state of health and of disease.

I. The brain is a material organ, and is liable to be acted upon by many physical causes.

This is almost a self-evident proposition, since we see that it is possessed of extension, figure, solidity, and of a certain degree of invariable structural arrangement. It is true that we are unacquainted with the ultimate cerebral fibre, or with the reason why these fibres are assembled according to their present form; and it is also true, that we are unacquainted with the mode of their function: but we conclude, from very close analogy, that the brain is most perfectly adapted to its peculiarity of function, because we know that this is the case with other organs and functions of the body; and because we find, from observation, that this office is more or less perfectly performed, according to varying circumstances of original character, and physiological manifestation, as well as according to the phenomena of health or indisposition. Now, as such, the brain will require a due and regular supply of fine and healthy blood, exactly in proportion to the extent and importance of its agency in the animal economy; and its functions will be feebly and irritably carried on if that supply be defective in quantity, or less highly animalized than in its most perfect state. On the contrary, it will be oppressed, if the supply should exceed the demand of ordinary expenditure: and it will

be variously irritated and disturbed, if that blood shall not have undergone its proper purifying change in the lungs; and, more especially, if it shall have been charged with any noxious qualities; according to the extent of its deterioration, the intensity of the consequent morbid impression, and the disordered changes with which it is associated.

But, since the brain also forms the centre of nervous sympathy, it is intimately connected with many other viscera, whose functions cannot be carried on without the assistance derived from this organ, and whose infinitely varied disturbances are all propagated by a reflex action to this common centre. Thus, disorder of stomach will interfere with the integrity of brainular action, and head-ache, languor, and inaptitude for mental exertion, are the consequence. This state continuing a certain length of time, or being frequently repeated, will, in a constitution so predisposed, give rise to hypochondriasis: and, in a still more aggravated form of impression, this hypochondriasis may be exchanged for deeper mental aberration: and thus the due functions of the brain will be suspended—perhaps irrecoverably destroyed—by the reflex action of disorder, whose first point of irritation was in the stomach.

Again : the skin is an important organ ; and a simple morbid impression made upon it will sometimes occasion a degree of cerebral disturbance. Even in common catarrh, the earliest symptoms will very generally be those of unwonted drowsiness and oppression : these will be followed by chills, and a certain wandering of intellectual manifestation, which indicates that the brain is not under the usual control of the will ; and when the subsequent re-action has occurred, it will be accompanied by pain in the head, excited susceptibility to sensorial impression, and general disposition to over-action. When this first impression may have been more intense, particularly if it shall have resulted from the invasion of fever of a specific character, the cerebral disturbance will be more distinctly characterized ; and the deviations from correct, congruous, coherent, and consecutive thought, will be more apparent. This is so manifestly the case, that some authors have placed the seat of fever exclusively in the brain, because that organ always suffers more or less ; forgetting that, although it has to bear its own peculiar burdens, it is also called upon to sympathize, when any other organ of the body is affected with morbid irritation ; thus proving that it is eminently the organ

which is most under the influence of physical disturbance.

Again : every person may have remarked the unwonted irritability which attaches to convalescents. And, be it remarked, that it is unwonted : they who have borne long, submissively, and patiently, with great suffering, become impatient and irritable as soon as they begin to recover ; and this, not from a feeling of having exhausted a long-tried stock of patience, but from a peculiar state of the brain, which it requires a great mental effort to control. Every person who has experienced this return from sickness to health, knows this to be the fact : and it is manifest in children, who would not be subjected to these effects, if they arose from an exhaustion of the influence of patience and submission, as moral motives ; but who *do* equally experience this irritability, which takes its origin from a purely physical condition, and which observers actually hail as the harbinger of returning health ; because, even to the observation of those who reason not upon its causes, this indication has been associated by experience with the setting in of a new train of healthy actions.

Nor let the sincere Christian be fearful of avowing his belief in the physical origin of a

state which he so much deplores: let him indeed be cautious of making this an excuse for peevishness and restlessness; let him beware of crying Peace, where there can be no real peace,—that is, if this temper of mind be not combated: and while, on the one hand, he ought not to adopt that harsh and unjust judgment which would produce a doubt of his interest in the Saviour's atonement, because of the existence, which he mourns over, of feelings thus opposed to the meekness and patience of that Saviour's example; let him, on the other hand, deplore this state, though a physical condition, as an evidence of that debasing influence of sin which has been exerted upon the manifestations of mind, and upon the organ through which they are made. Let him consider this painful struggle as a portion of the trial of his faith and patience, and as perhaps rendered especially necessary at a period when the overwhelming gratitude of recovery renders the mind peculiarly liable to be less watchful than usual, and to those oscillations of feeling which take place rapidly, and often imperceptibly, under the influence of powerful emotion. Let him become guarded in his joy, and remember to "watch unto prayer." Let him recollect that he is called upon to grapple with this physical condition, and by a powerful mental effort, made

in dependance upon the assistance of the Holy Spirit, the Sanctifier, to keep his heart with all diligence, to preserve it stayed upon his God, to cultivate a devotional spirit, and to show forth the glory of the Saviour by more closely imitating his example. There is, then, no plea for indolence, no excuse for supineness: the existence of feebleness call upon him for the display of energy, and invites him to seek for strength where alone it can be found.

Again: the effect of some articles of food or medicine will confirm my principal position. A certain moderate quantity of wine will render the individual more cheerful, give brilliancy to his ideas, and stimulate the organ of thought to more intense exertion. A larger dose of the same fluid will make one individual outrageously joyous and noisy, while another will become stupid and melancholic, according to his peculiar temperament; and a still larger quantity will abolish consciousness from both alike: and absolute intoxication will destroy all traces of the rational creature. The influence of several medicines will be presently noticed among the morbid trains of cerebral impression: it is here only necessary to state, that they are varied and extensive.

Once more: bodily fatigue will induce a degree of cerebral irritability, which, in ordinary

cases, will prevent the usual approach of sleep, and give rise to such a susceptibility of the nervous system, that it will be prepared for any morbid impression. A similar effect will be produced by the excitement of society, or by emotion of any kind, of an intense character; thus showing that the brain, as a *material organ*, is similarly acted upon both by causes from within, and by those which attach more particularly to exterior nature; by mental exertion, and by physical influence. On the other hand, too much sleep produces an effect of a different kind: the patient rises with a dull obtuse headache; he feels that his perceptions are obscured, that he is stupid, that he wants his usual activity of body and mind, that his spirits are oppressed, and that he misses his customary cheerfulness. Now the difference of these two conditions consists in this: in the former case, there is increased action of the *arteries* of the brain, and the individual is conscious of the change; in the latter, there is a sluggish congested state of the *veins*; thus proving, that, according to these varying physical states, the manifestations of mind are different; and even opposite, and that the organ is a material one—mainly influenced by physical causes. But enough has been said for

my present purpose : the several forms of cerebral delusion and morbid action will be noticed hereafter.

II. This material organ, thus influenced by physical causes, is the organ of mind, and will characterize, not, indeed, its essence, its real character, but its manifestations, by its operation upon the ideas conveyed to the immaterial spirit from without, as well as upon those produced by its unaided and spontaneous action from within. Man possesses an internal consciousness that the brain is the organ through which he thinks, reasons, remembers, imagines, distinguishes, and performs other mental operations : and this consciousness is as positive as would be that of the hand being the organ of prehension to a blind person, who sought after an acquaintance with the properties of matter through this medium.

Indeed, when we recollect that man is a compound creature,—made up of a perishable body, and of an imperishable mind,—we see how impossible it would be for that body to be subjected to the influence of mind, unless it possessed with the latter some medium of communication ; and, consequently, that, without this medium, man's moral responsibility would be destroyed. It is true, that the omniscient Creator *might*

have subjected the body to a purely spiritual influence, without any corporeal mode of communication with it; because He is also omnipotent. But then it is manifest, that there would have been no consciousness of personal identity; and man would not be able to distinguish that which resulted from the influence of bodily association, from that which was prompted by this mysterious presiding spirit: from all which we infer the excellence of the present arrangement; and we exclaim from the heart, “O Lord, how excellent are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all.” In this way also man *feels* that he is a responsible agent, because he is conscious of this mental action, and knows that the brain is subjected to the influence of volition. For an attention to all its actions and promptings, therefore, he is immediately answerable; and for the *indulgence* of all the suggestions of the spirit, he is equally, though remotely, accountable; because he is furnished with the faculty of discriminating good from evil, and with the power of choosing the one and refusing the other: and then it will follow, that, if responsible for the indulgence of spiritual suggestions, he must be increasingly amenable for those actions and passions which arise from every germ of evil, but

which would never obtain their full development unaided by their appropriate organs of expression. "Who can understand his errors? Cleanse thou me from secret faults: keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins: let them not have dominion over me."

If we required a proof at once that the brain is the organ of mind, and that it is at the same time material, it would be found in the common influence of intense thought; as, for instance, in the writer of the present essay, when engaged upon a subject requiring his whole attention, the extremities are cold, while the head is proportionally heated: but let him lay aside his pen, or only divert his thoughts to a current of minor importance, and, in less than three minutes, the feet will be glowing with a return of the circulation of blood in the extremities; and this phenomenon happens not one night only, but every night, in the midst of summer as well as in winter. So extraordinary and invariable a circumstance must surely have some mode of rational explanation. It is not sufficient to say, that the attention is deeply engaged, and therefore the circulation of the blood is sluggish. The circulation, as such, has nothing to do with this faculty; we cannot by mere attention increase or diminish one pulsation. Half the

errors of mankind arise from their unwillingness to observe, and from their preference of preconceived opinions to the investigation of facts. But let us attend for a moment to the process just detailed : what does it prove ?

First, That intense thought excites brainular action :

Secondly, That this increased action requires a larger supply of blood than usual to support it :

Thirdly, That by a physical law this supply is sent to the organ which particularly requires it ; and, therefore, that the extreme parts of the system, those at a great distance from the centre of the circulation, and from the organ in a state of excitation, as well as those which are inactive, all obtain deficient supplies of blood, and become cold in consequence :

Fourthly, That this increased action, being produced by thought, proves the brain to be the organ through which the operations of the immaterial spirit are carried on ; and that its active functions can only be supported by a larger supply of blood than is necessary to sustain its mere vitality, or even to maintain the vigour of its bodily agency : and it follows, that since this organ of thought requires the assistance of a material fluid, in order to support this

excited action, itself also must be material; a fact which is even more fully shown by the provision which has been made for granting this increased supply without injury to the organ: but if this be granted, the consequence is inevitable,—

Fifthly, That the brain must be liable to disorder of function from a deficient, redundant, or ill-timed supply of this fluid; or from any imperfection in its vital properties; or from any deleterious change which it may have undergone in its elaboration, or under the influence of disease, or from a thousand other bodily causes; as well as from many intangible mental associations, so finely connected that it may be impossible to trace them, and yet which it would be absurd to deny. Hence it follows,

Sixthly, That there may be many morbid states of thought, and feeling, and perception, with which we are utterly unacquainted. But if the brain be the organ of mind, and if it be thus physically and morally related, it will happen that the common *internal* actions of the mind, though necessarily perfect in themselves, may be variously altered in their manifestations by transmission through this material organ; and that no one can ever hope to arrive at a true philosophy of mind, unless he will submit

to consider the action and re-action of spirit upon matter, and of matter upon spirit; nor unless he will allow that their mutual operations may be variously influenced by different corporeal states, and more especially by disease.

III. The brain is subjected to a variety of morbid impressions, which will produce corresponding alterations upon the mental manifestations; a proposition which will be subsequently developed, in treating of the effects arising from various morbid causes, acting upon the nervous system.

IV. The important corollary from the foregoing propositions is, That the morbid impressions upon the organ of mind will be characterized by the particular bodily or mental source whence they were originally derived, and will thus admit of many variations. A friend whose testimony may be relied upon, and whose cool judgment enables him to watch the agency of disease, has often told me, that when suffering from determination of blood to the head, he always feels a tendency to undue elation; and, on the contrary, to depression whenever the digestive functions are disordered.

The sanguine expectations of consumptive patients, and the degree in which hope is fondly cherished by them, even when the last remnant

of vitality is well nigh exhausted, are proverbial, and form a perfect contrast with the depression and hypochondriacal feelings of those who suffer from disordered digestive functions. Indeed, the very term *hypochondriasis*, like other corresponding Greek and Latin words, such as melancholy and atrabiliarian, show how completely the ancients referred this brainular state to the influence of those distant organs.

Again, affections of the heart are characterized by a great degree of anxiety and solicitude, but are not usually accompanied by depressed spirits. All these facts are generally admitted. The evil consists in this,—that they have been received as true, without reasoning upon them, or inquiring into their cause. But do they not prove that the organ of mind is variously affected by the morbid sympathies of distant functions,—and that too according to a rule, which, though not understood, experience and observation have enabled us to predict? And if this be undeniably the case, with regard to a few forms of morbid impression with which we are acquainted, is it not fair to infer that a similar influence *may* be exerted, though probably by a somewhat different method of expression, by the unnumbered modes of diseased association which we *cannot trace*,—not only with regard to

the important organs already specified, but to several others, with whose particular agency we may be unacquainted? And, if so, may not a variety of morbid cerebral impressions be referred to some one of these different causes:—and may not its hallucinations be satisfactorily accounted for upon this principle?

V. We come next to examine the influence of several morbid states of the brain, in order to prove and illustrate these positions.

1. *Simple excitement*, whether excessive in degree, or only moderate but long continued, will produce a slight deviation from health, which in some cases will be remedied by repose; and, in others, will occasion more or less of permanent disorder. But in both instances the brain will ultimately suffer; and the functions of body, and the manifestations of mind, will be impaired, enfeebled, or even altered. For too great activity of the brain expends rapidly the stock of nutrition; and every attentive observer of himself must have noticed the fatigue induced by mental occupation,—the muscular feebleness, the weariness which come over him. And again,—under other circumstances he will have remarked how much bodily exertion he could encounter, so long as his mind was at peace, or cheered by hope, and

animated by joyful expectation ; and how soon he became exhausted if the spirit had been ruffled by any teasing occurrences ; if the germ of displeasure rankled in his bosom ; if he had been vexed by disappointment, or harassed by the dissipation of fancy's airy and glowing visions ; or if from any other cause depression had brooded over the future, and enveloped his prospects with her sable mantle of fear and uncertainty.

Further,—this state of the brain disturbs the digestive process ; and, therefore, not only exhausts the present stock, but diminishes the future supply of nutrition. For, in order to the completeness of this process, it is necessary that an increased quantity of blood be determined to the stomach, in order that the nervous energy may be accumulated upon that organ ; so that rest of body, and freedom from disquieting, or even joyful emotion, or much thought, should be observed. If, on the contrary, the brain be intently engaged by intellectual occupation, it calls for that supply of blood, which ought to be sent to the stomach, to perfect its secretions ; and the same fluid cannot be found at the same time in two places ; nervous energy is rapidly strained off from its source, and therefore cannot be spared for a distant organ : the

individual possesses an intellectual and spiritual existence, but forgets the necessities of his compound nature; the animal functions, in consequence, suffer deeply; the stomach becomes enfeebled—it digests imperfectly; assimilation of the undigested mass is impossible, and the function of nutrition can only be half-performed. As proofs of this position, I need only mention the effect produced upon the stomach by any sudden mental impression: as, for instance, when it is empty, and the desire for food is urgent, appetite will be instantly destroyed by such an occurrence; and appetite in a healthy state of the organs and their secretions, is the expression of the power of digesting food; and, on the other hand, when the stomach is filled, although this power shall have precededly existed, indigestion, with all its train of consequences, will be the result. The effect of hard reading upon the studious is notorious. A gradual wasting of the body, enfeebled muscular power and general debility, proclaim the exhausting influence which brainular excitement has exerted upon the frame. A common hair-dresser, wholly ignorant of science, said the other day to a friend of mine, who is prematurely grey-headed, “I presume, sir, you have been a close student.” “And why so?” “Because, sir,

we always remark that study dries up the hair. I suppose it makes the brain feverish, and that this exhausts the nourishment." The observation may be worth recording, as every unsophisticated observation deserves notice, although I much question its being borne out by experience; my own recollection immediately furnishing examples of premature grey hairs in individuals, who have been any thing but studious. And, if true, it would be difficult to understand how the effect should be produced by such a cause, since the colour of the hair depends upon its oil—*whiteness* upon the absence of that oil—*greyness*, of course, upon its partial abstraction.

But again, this cerebral excitement overturns the balance of power in the system. Health depends upon each organ or function of the body being neither in a state of irritation or depression: and, therefore, if the brain, upon which all the others depend, be unduly excited, and expend upon itself more than its just share of nervous energy, not one only, but all the organs and functions are thrown into disorder and confusion; the equilibrium of animal and intellectual life is destroyed, and both give way under so cruel an experiment.

And, lastly, brainular excitement keeps up a

continued irritation, or permanent febrile action in the constitution. It has been truly said, that "midnight study retires to feverish rest;" for the brain cannot be goaded to exertion without requiring a larger quantity of blood: to afford this supply, it calls upon the heart and arteries for augmented action; and this action is, in fact, a state of fever, of a remittent kind, and produces the natural consequences of disease.

Now, in these effects of simple excitement are to be found the causes which operate in producing morbid manifestations of mind; since they all re-act upon the brain, and, through it, apparently, upon the intellectual principle. First, feebleness of the brainular organ arises from a lavish expenditure of its energies; it is not recruited by rest, because its supply of healthy blood is diminished; the balance of power being destroyed, it is liable to become the slave of any other organ of the body in a state of irritation; and in consequence of the febrile action which is produced by the general disturbance, not only can it never be at peace, but morbid images, resulting from that action, are excited. Where this state exists, ideas succeed each other without the possibility of controlling them; and the morbid causes which

occasion this involuntary, incoherent, and undefined succession, are not to be removed by reasoning, because they result from organic agencies which have escaped the presidency of the will, and have usurped that authority which, in a well-ordered system, should be maintained exclusively by the function of volition. And when once this state of disorder has been introduced, no bounds can be set to the creation of unreal and disconnected images; and a condition of the brain, and of its mental manifestations has been produced, most favourable to the creation of supernatural appearances, and to the belief in dreams, visions, and omens.

Another law of this organ, of great importance in the present discussion, is, that actual consciousness may be suspended by any powerful cause acting upon it, even during its waking and healthy state; and much more when enfeebled by disease, or any other oppressing cause. This is a most important law, because it serves so greatly to support the main position I have advanced,—of the production of unreal images by the brain, without any consciousness of the action by which they are called into being. Thus, actual and severe pain may be suspended by powerful impression: as, for instance, a fit of tooth-ache by the

apprehension of extraction ; a severe paroxysm of gout, or acute rheumatism, with their accompanying impossibility of motion, by the vicinity of a dangerous fire : the presence of another individual, the lapse of time, and the recurrence of the usual periodical demands for food on the part of the constitution, will be all unperceived during the earnest continuance of some abstracting pursuit ; even the most powerful appetites and desires will be suspended by mental occupation of an interesting character. This suspension of consciousness will serve to account for many of the far-famed cures of Prince Hohenlohe, which, it is confessed, were only temporary. And when once consciousness is suspended, the mind is prepared for receiving, as real, many creations of a vivid fancy.

But if this state of simple excitement be exchanged for that which is positively morbid ; if the brain be suffering from the oppression of invading disease, (especially if that disease should be of a specific character,) which at first threatened to overwhelm its power and destroy its integrity at once ; or from the consequences of that re-action, which results from an effort of the constitution to restore that which has been threatened with destruction ; then a variety of morbid states are produced.

In the first place, the customary period of repose ceases to be one of quietude and peace; uneasy slumbers, unrefreshing sleep, and frightful dreams, haunt the patient; nightmare, in its thousand forms, broods upon his pillow; lassitude, languor, and weariness, attend his waking moments; head-ache proclaims the distressed organ; the changed expression of the countenance is characteristic,—that which was lighted up by intelligence, now speaks only of distress; that which eloquently told the varied emotions of the mind, now proclaims only the anxiousness of bodily disorder; and even, oftentimes, defines its extent by the greater or less completeness with which mental manifestation is obliterated: there exists a feebleness, and sometimes a perversion, of sensorial, intellectual, moral, and muscular movements, because all these are oppressed by the disturbance of the organ of mind; some of the senses are extraordinarily obtuse, while others are rendered morbidly irritable and acute; the delightful action of thought becomes an oppression, and consecutive reasoning is impossible. It is most difficult to pursue any thing like connected trains of images or impressions; the influence of the passions is now purely mischievous, because those of a simply exciting character, in

any moderate degree, will not be attended to, and those which are powerfully stimulant will only still further overturn the balance of healthy action; while, on the contrary, those of a depressing tendency, and especially *fear*, will become predominant.

But when health returns, the period allotted to sleep again becomes one of refreshment, and the exhausted power and energy of the day are recruited during the night; the attacks of nightmare become less frightful in proportion; dreams assume a less painful character, until they become remarkable for their ridiculous perplexities: the head feels at ease; a lightness and elasticity of expression again beam upon the countenance; the functions of the senses become nicely adjusted, as the safeguards of the system; the servant of the spiritual principle regains its appetite for intellectual food, and literary pursuit is relished; the delicacy of moral tact is restored, and muscular motion is once more characterised by energy; thought is the merely healthful exercise of the mind, and even close and abstruse reasoning is but the little additional exertion of the vigorous; like mounting a hill which is to give a commanding view of cultivated scenery, and which will repay the difficulty of access, by the varied

and interesting associations presented to the view. When the Christian contemplates these facts, emotions of adoring gratitude should swell his bosom with joy and love to that generous Benefactor, by whom his health is daily sustained, and he is preserved in the possession of the full use of his powers; and this conviction, with the knowledge how easily they might be disturbed, should lead him to a renewed dedication of every talent to Him, who justly claims the whole heart: he should be incited to greater diligence; to work while it is day, lest the night of disease and feebleness should obliterate his power of usefulness and acquisition; he should be humbled with a recollection of the cause which first introduced this liability to disorder into the bodily and mental functions; and also with the consideration of the most splendid intellectual possessions, since he has nothing which he did not receive, nothing but which the fever of a day might obliterate for a time, and perhaps for ever; and he should be filled with benevolence and compassion towards those whose mental manifestations are feeble or perverted; while to enlarge mental power in general, but chiefly to give it a just direction, should be his constant desire.

But, once more, the brain is an organ of

extensive sympathy. This much-abused term is often employed as a cloke for complete but acknowledged ignorance. It is, however, accepted in the present discussion, as meaning that the brain stands so closely related to other organs of the body, that it possesses the capacity of suffering with them whenever they are in a state of irritation; and also, of reflecting upon them its own morbid actions, which they in their turn oftentimes assume, and then become secondary irritants to the brain: and further, that it is subjected to irritation of a peculiar character, according to the organ which forms the originating point of disturbance. These positions will be illustrated by attending to the mode of sympathetic action of the several organs with which it is most distinctly associated.

In *all disease* the functions of the brain oftentimes suffer most deeply, and produce, when so suffering, a great, and occasionally a most frightful, degree of debility: in fact, it seems as if the strength were suspended altogether, and stolen away, the patient knows not how. This is very remarkably the case, when it is itself the peculiar seat of suffering: prostration of muscular power is very generally an accompaniment of irritated brain, though not

always ; for occasionally the patient will make the most incredible efforts under these circumstances. Many of the greatly varied phenomena of brainular irritation will depend upon the portion of brain which is particularly disturbed ; for it is well known, that that organ may at all events be divided into the brain of animal relation, and that which is sensorial and intellectual. There are also many finer shades of cerebral disturbance, which escape our notice altogether, and pass off as peculiarity of manner, odd habits, whim, ill-humour, or eccentricity. But from what source is this peculiarity of manner derived ? It is often quite independent of, and indeed absolutely opposed to, the intellectual, social, and moral associations of the individual ; nay, more, it will give the law to education, and characterize the man. It cannot be derived from any peculiarity of the spiritual essence : for it is absurd to suppose, that there are souls of different kinds ; a mode of being totally opposed to the harmony of the divine Creator, and destructive of moral accountability. But the difficulty is easily removed, by considering it as the character which is stamped upon the *manifestation* of spiritual existence, by the *material medium* through which it is rendered cognizable : and thus it is, that

these changes of thought and feeling are often ascribable to variations of health, and particular aptitude for impression in the recipient organ,—variations which escape detection, but which, nevertheless, do actually exist, and even form a portion of the probationary trial of man's earthly existence,—and are a result of that primal sin which introduced disease into the perfect brain, and consequent disorder of its manifestations.

To illustrate this position by a fact, A. B. was a child of the highest possible promise; her extraordinary intelligence, her docility of temper, her amenity of disposition, her easy suasion, and her capacity of impression, were remarkable. She became the subject of measles, and to a peculiar form of brainular irritation, which is often consequent upon that malady. In her case, this attack was severe, and she recovered with difficulty. For a considerable time after that recovery was decided, her manifestations of mind were scarcely perceptible, and her little idiot smile inflicted upon her parents a pang, which for awhile made them doubt whether that convalescence were a blessing or a still heavier trial. Months passed away with a gradual return of intellectual agency: but her character was entirely changed. She is no

longer the *creature of intellect*, though sufficiently intelligent; her temper is become violent, obstinate, and often ungovernable; she is timid, morose, and furtive, instead of confident, mild, and open: when her resolution is formed, it is impossible to move her; and her susceptibility to impression and capacity for acquisition are contracted. Now what has occasioned this change? Disease, most manifestly. And upon what has it exerted its influence? upon the brain, which was the immediate seat of that disease: or upon the spiritual principle, which is incapable of disease? Surely common sense must reply, upon the brain. But, if so, it is shown that a change of the *material medium* may for a time obliterate, and afterwards obscure, alter, and pervert, the manifestations of mind. Hence it follows, that similar, but transient morbid states, may produce equal though not permanent changes and, perversions; and if so, the basis of all our future reasoning is granted.

Another law of the brain's sympathy is, that any organic lesion, however distant, is yet felt by it in a very lively manner: this produces disturbance of cerebral function; and then, as well as in the case of its own injuries, in consequence of its extensive relations with the

animal economy, it reflects general disorder upon it, quickens the pulse, hurries the breathing, pall the appetite, and destroys the digestion. But more ; it does this, not as a simple centre of nervous influence and sympathy ; but *as the organ of mind ; for all these phenomena are sometimes the effect of fear, grief, or other absorbing passions.* And if the same effect be produced by bodily and mental causes upon distant organs, is it not fair to conclude, that it is occasioned through the same medium, unless another and a better mode of communication can be demonstrated ? The author will illustrate this position, by a history of one of the slightest and simplest injuries to the brain ; though this detail involves a narrative of a small section of his own not uneventful life. About twelve months since he was thrown from his horse, and was taken up in a state of unconsciousness : the kind attentions of some poor persons, who fancied him dead, restored him to a certain extent ; so that to their inquiries, whether he would walk home, or whether a post-chaise should be sent for, he answered automatically, that “he would walk.” But of all this, of the lapse of time, and of walking home upon the arm of an attendant, he had no consciousness or recollection. After his arrival,

excessive sickness was produced, and an extreme degree of coldness, such as he had never before felt, with an imperfect degree of returning consciousness : and then febrile reaction occurred, which was kept within certain bounds ; and, finally, the organ was restored. Now in this case it is not to be supposed that the *spiritual principle suffered* : and yet, for the time, its action seems to have been suddenly annihilated ; precisely, because, from the injury its organ had sustained, it was no longer capable of intellectual manifestation. Presently animal volition returned ; which is proved by the automatic answers, and by walking home ; but as yet there was no consciousness. At length comes the reflected disorder of the brain upon the stomach, the skin, and the general system : fever is produced, and ultimately, the manifestations of mind go on as usual. If we will but attend to these common circumstances with unprejudiced views, we cannot avoid learning the truth. But, instead of this, we are contented to say, “This is a simple history of a person’s being *stunned* by a sudden violent blow.” True ! And what is this *stunning*, but rendering the brain in such a physical condition, that it is *incapable of the manifestations* of mind ? And is it too much

to ask, that if one state of the brain may render it unfit for mental operation at all, another and a different state may give rise to morbid manifestations and unreal images ?

CHAPTER IV.

Particular sympathies of the brain:—with the heart—with the blood—with the organs of respiration—with the stomach—with the liver—with the function of secretion in general—with the muscular system—with the skin, &c. —conclusions.

To return to the digression with which we concluded the last chapter, we will now contemplate some of the extensive sympathies of the brain; and first *with the heart*.

I. It requires no argument to prove how easily palpitation of the heart may be produced, by surprise, fear, joy, desire; and indeed by every kind of mental emotion, as well as by a variety of hypochondriacal or hysterical affections; and, on the contrary, we are conscious that this very palpitation disturbs the brain, interrupts the processes of thought, agitates the feelings, and introduces disorder and confusion into the mental manifestations.

The phenomena of *fainting* afford another instance of this double sympathy. It will often arise from mental emotion, producing such an effect upon the brain, that the due supply of nervous energy, necessary for the continuance of the heart's function, is withheld from it: then it has not the power to contract, so as to send its regular quantity of blood to the brain; and, wanting this, a suspension of its action occurs, and absolute fainting is the consequence. The spirit is not affected, but its manifestation is suspended; and how is it to be restored? Not, surely, by reading lectures to that spiritual principle, on the necessity and importance of retaining or recovering its consciousness; but by the common physical processes of placing the patient in a horizontal position, so as to favour the return of blood to the head; and by stimulating the brain by the sudden application of cold water sprinkled upon the face; by excitants applied to the different organs of sense, and by other similar operations. In suspended animation from another cause, all mental agency is gone, and the patient appears to be dead; yet by observing certain physical rules, vital action is restored; and, after a time, the brainular functions are performed as before. Besides, it is a well-established fact, that dis-

ease of the heart is the frequent consequence of grief, and of other violent contentions of spirit. A proof of this is to be found in the greatly-increased frequency of affections of this organ in France since the era of the Revolution. And what is all this, says an objector, but a simple instance of fainting, or, if you must have it so, of the extensive influence of the mind? But it is more : for it is a proof of the dependence of that mind, for the correctness and perfection of its manifestations, upon the integrity of the organ allotted by the Creator to its functions.

II. Another class of sympathies of the cerebral organ is with *the blood*.

It has been just shown that the brain cannot continue its function without an adequate supply of blood. This probably acts in two ways : first, by the impression of its circulation ; and secondly, by the vital principles which it contains. Chemists may analyze this fluid, and may tell us what are its constituent elements : but they cannot produce from it bone, muscle, nerve, and the various organs and functions to which it gives rise. This can be accomplished only by a vital action, termed secretion ; which cannot be perfected without the intervention of the *brain*. Now *one* purpose of the blood dis-

tributed to the cerebral organ is, to give it nourishment. But it receives a much greater quantity than can be required for this purpose, even after making a large allowance for its very high degree of vitality; and, indeed, this would again bring us round to the same point, since *why* is it endowed with a higher degree of vitality than other viscera? If, then, it do actually receive a much larger quantity of blood, than can be necessary for its nutrition; if this quantity be increased during the excitement of deep thought, close reading, or agitating emotion; and if its temporary absence, or rapid diminution, do occasion the complete abolition of sense, and intellectual and affective operations,—what can we conclude, but that the brain is necessary—not indeed to the essence of the immortal spirit—but to its corporeal manifestations?

Again: the blood received by the brain must be pure; it must have undergone its regular changes in passing through the lungs; otherwise it will prove destructive to its physiological action, or will occasion disordered manifestations. Now, if the mere absence of the vital principles which it should contain, is thus injurious to the integrity and perfection of the cerebral function, much more will that function be

injured, or even annihilated, if it be loaded with any deleterious substance or quality.

But again : the brain must obtain no more than its due proportion of this necessary fluid. For if it receive an excessive quantity, it will experience as material a disturbance to the energy of its functions, as in the instance of a defective supply ; only the mode of producing this effect will be different. And even this very difference of manner, leading to the same ultimate result, is instructive ; showing how greatly the brain, and the manifestations of mind, are subjected to the agency of the same physical causes. For in the former state, there will supervene giddiness, head-ache, a sense of uneasy distension, drowsiness, heavy sleep, loss of energy, feebleness of the will, lethargy ; and if this morbid influence be not relieved, all the miserable symptoms of apoplexy, and a complete or partial abolition of sense and reason, together with the entire subversion of the integrity of intellectual manifestation : and in the latter, a variety of uneasy sensations, all indicating the feebleness of the brainular functions, and their partial or total temporary cessation, according as the abstraction of blood may have been more or less considerable. Further : the subsequent effect of any great loss of blood

is, that the convalescence of the patient is exceedingly slow : it is a long time before the brain can be commanded by the will, and before it can sustain much intellectual exertion ; hence the subject of such a state will remain feeble, peevish, irritable, and oftentimes essentially altered in his character. Not, indeed, that ideas are elaborated from the blood, or that the function of the brain can be compared to any process of ordinary secretion : nor that this fluid can impress upon the organ any facility of peculiar moral or intellectual manifestation. The Almighty Fountain of wisdom has provided for these purposes a viscus, to which he has given the necessary wonderful structure, although we do not pretend to explain or comprehend the mode of its function ; and this structure receives from the blood its peculiar pabulum ; so that its actions may be increased, diminished, or modified ; and, finally, so that, under certain circumstances, the manifestations of mind may be perverted, or abolished—producing, in the former instance, the various forms of mental alienation and fatuity ; and, in the latter, fainting, and the several varieties of nervous affection, convulsions, apoplexy, and even death. Surely, then, it may be allowed, that an organ thus intimately dependent upon

the blood for the integrity of its function, may, under the influence of certain morbid states of that fluid, exhibit many erroneous manifestations of mind.

III. Another sympathy of the brain is with the *organs of respiration*.

This intercommunion of suffering is maintained through the medium of nerves, which go to supply the muscles concerned in respiration, and of those which are received by the lungs themselves. If these nerves be divided, or so pressed upon as to intercept their communication with the brain, *death*, the stoppage of every intellectual and spiritual function, so far as developed through the material organs of the body, is the immediate consequence. But if this entire severance be attended with an instantly fatal result, the disruption of the union between body and mind, is it not a probable inference, that a minor degree of violence, consisting in simple irritation of these nerves, must also disturb the source whence they are derived? Now every uneasiness, excess, or defect,—that is, every disordered action, is constituted an irritant to the organ so subjected to morbid influence. And, since the forms of disease of the chest are various, is it otherwise than a legitimate inference, that the brain may be variously

irritated according to these peculiarities of disordered action? But *if so, we may have several varieties of cerebral irritation arising from the disturbance of only one organ.* Moreover, it is impossible to suppose that the brain can be irritated without suffering deeply in its intellectual functions. And if these premises be granted, it is impossible to deny or evade the conclusion, that *these several forms of irritation may produce a coincident number of morbid cerebral manifestations.*

A little further consideration will show how very intimately the lungs are associated with the brainular function; and, if this be proved, the *reflex* action of the same influence cannot be denied. Let us only attend to some common circumstances of life, and quietly listen to their voice; let us look to the agency of emotion in quickening respiration; let us watch the tumultuous heavings of the bosom from the effect of simply listening to that which deeply interests the feelings; let us remember its convulsive agitations in the act of laughter from joy; let us listen to the automatic sigh of merely animal oppression, and contrast it with the deep expressive symbol of real grief as it bursts from the breaking heart of the mourner; let us appreciate the intense and involuntary earnest-

ness with which we listen in breathless expectation, particularly under circumstances of fear ; let us attend to the unwonted sob of mental agony, or of violent bodily suffering ; and let us watch the agitation produced by some forms of hysterical disease ;—and then must we confess how closely and essentially the brain and the respiratory organs are linked together, and how interchangeably each must suffer from the irritation of the other. Besides, as has been already shown, the brain requires a *pure* blood to ensure the continuance of its healthy functions ; and, in order to this, there must be a sound state of the lungs, and a pure atmosphere easily and freely inhaled ; conditions of indispensable importance that the blood may not be imperfectly oxygenated ; and that the brain may not suffer in consequence of that fluid's being deprived of its highest vital qualities. Therefore, if the brain and its manifestations of mind be impaired by receiving a blood unsuitable for its purposes, how much more will it be perverted by the action of that fluid when impregnated with absolutely noxious particles !

IV. Sympathy of the brain with *the stomach and alimentary canal*.

I must next notice the connexion, and listen to the sympathies, existing between the brain

and the stomach, together with the alimentary canal; and we shall here also find how completely the latter are dependent upon the former, and observe the consequent influence exerted by any morbid cause of irritation existing within either.—In the first place, the stomach receives from the brain certain nerves, the integrity of which is indispensable to the performance of its function of digestion or alimentation. Destroy this communication, and the action of assimilation ceases: this at least proves the close connexion between the two organs, and will afford room for suspecting that any morbid change in a function, so entirely dependent upon the brain, must reflect its irritating influence upon the source from which all power of healthy action is derived. But further: the influence of prolonged study in diminishing the digestive power, and the gradual wasting of the flesh, and general exhaustion, which follow from a severe course of reading; the suspension of appetite, and the indigestion *after* eating, which arise from any sudden and considerable mental emotion: the destruction of the tone of the stomach, the chronic irritation, and even ulceration of its coats, from the slow and insidious but certain effects of grief and disappointment, when suf-

ferred to prey upon the mind, without seeking for the consolations of religion : the nausea and disgust which, in some individuals, are produced by the sight or smell of certain articles, which have formerly proved injurious to them, and which declare these senses to be appointed as faithful sentinels to the system, and to enable us at the same time to trace the limits of association between function and function : the absolute sickness which will sometimes result from the preceding state, and particularly from the idea of swallowing that from which we have a decided aversion ; a similar effect sometimes produced from mere nervousness, that is, from *mental emotion* : the participation of the stomach in almost all the maladies with which the brain is directly or indirectly affected, and the expression of its uneasiness being sometimes the *only* symptom which would lead to a suspicion of irritation of the brain : the frequently severe disturbance of the stomach, called “ sick head-ache,” and which originates primarily from an affection of *the brain* ; or from concussion or compression of that organ, or on recovery from fainting ;—all show how completely the former is under the influence of the latter, and betray the intemate sympathy be-

tween the two functions ; which is still farther confirmed by the cerebral uneasiness and disorder in diseases of the stomach.

We may elucidate this state of morbid sympathy, by contemplating the rationale of some of its healthy functions. Hunger and thirst, for instance, and the desire of satisfying appetite, although frequently referred to the stomach, do not exist there ; but are the results, when unsophisticated, of the wants of the system impressed upon the nerves of the stomach and *referred to the brain*, in order that volition may be excited to satisfy those wants, and to preserve that system. When the desire has been satisfied by taking food, a feeling of comfort will be diffused over all the animal machine, if the stomach has been moderately supplied ; accompanied, however, with a degree of languor and indisposition for intellectual exertion, and the desire of quiet, in order that the cerebral system may be fully occupied with the important process of digestion, without the peculiar aid of which the powers of the stomach would ultimately fail. In many persons of weakly digestion, a disposition to drowsiness occurs ; and the other functions of the system are not in activity, in order that *all* the nervous

influence that can be spared may be concentrated upon the stomach.

Where the meal has been moderate, all this passes without notice; but if the stomach shall have received more than it can conveniently digest, the *attention* of the nervous system is directed towards it, and the patient feels *oppressed*. And if this oppression be frequently repeated—perhaps every day, and several times in the day—permanent feebleness of intellect will be the result; because the energies of the brain are accumulated upon the animal system, and cannot be afforded for its intellectual functions. Hence it is that, by experience, persons engaged in literary pursuits, in extending the field of their own intelligence, or in communicating knowledge to others, know and feel that a full diet is incompatible with intellectual activity. Moreover, many extraordinary affections of the brain occur during difficult digestion; nay, spectral illusions, and often nervous symptoms, which show that that viscus is irritated; and that when irritated there is no placing bounds to its actions.

We must here also notice the effects produced upon this organ by various substances; and particularly by alcoholic fluids, tea, and coffee.

As a very slight stimulant the former is sometimes recommended, even by medical advisers ; but when the quantity is considerable, the stomach suffers sooner or later ; and, where a habit of drunkenness is continued, generally suffers irrecoverably. But it is with the effect upon the brain, and its manifestations of the mind, that we have chiefly to remark. In moderate doses, alcoholic fluids excite that organ gently, and stimulate the employment of its functions ; a degree of hilarity is observable ; a rapid flow of ideas ; increased acumen in disputation ; lively sallies of wit ; and generally augmented powers ; but when the quantity taken has been larger, reason is suspended—it is absolutely drowned : in some instances, perfect insanity is produced ; in all, the senses become obtuse. The muscles refuse obedience to the will ; the patient is unable to walk without staggering, or to speak without stammering ; and, in a more advanced stage of inebriety, the power of the brain is apparently lost ; a deep, heavy, apoplectic slumber comes over the patient, from which, after a certain interval, he awakens, stupid, enfeebled, with head-ache, languor, debilitated moral and intellectual manifestations, depression of spirits, and the consequent anxiety for a renewed dose of this

deadly stimulus. Disease, and perhaps suddenly fatal disease, frequently results from drunkenness; and where this may not be the immediate consequence, the continuance of the habit gradually terminates in an enfeebled brain; the individual is reduced below the level of the brute animal creation, and his besotted intellect is more and more clouded, till he becomes childish, fatuous, palsied, and lives out only half his days. There is, therefore, great danger in the habitual use of even slight alcoholic stimulants; for by custom a larger dose becomes necessary, as the excitability of the organs is lessened; till at length, what was taken perhaps at first with caution, and it may be with a view to health, becomes deeply injurious both to the mind and body, and leads on the unconscious victim to the miserable state I have described. The highly alcoholized wines used in this country, are a slow poison to thousands of persons who, from long habit, cannot feel wound up without them, and are not even aware that they are every day unduly stimulating the system, and bringing on premature decay, imbecility, and old age.

Tea and coffee, on the contrary, excite the brain without producing these deleterious effects, or at all endangering the manifestations

of mind; they cheer, but do not inebriate. They appear to communicate a great facility in forming, arranging, and communicating ideas: thought becomes rapid, acute, and of a superior order; composition, conversation, every effort of mind, becomes easier, more valuable, more perfect; and inappreciable energy is communicated to the mental operations. It must be allowed, however, that their habitual employment renders them necessary in order to secure a certain brainular stimulation, without which the energy of the organ is below its average power; but this only proves still farther the dependence of mind upon matter for its manifestations, and that too upon the condition of a distinct organ. It must also be recollected, that persons possessed of a highly nervous, susceptible, irritable temperament, cannot take these substances with *impunity*, much less with *advantage*; for the equilibrium of an already too highly irritable organ is disturbed, and wakefulness, with many a symptom of uneasy nervous disorder, is produced.

I must not entirely pass over the action of opium; the more especially as we shall have occasion to refer to it hereafter. It is well known, that this medicine is distributed to the Turkish troops, on the eve of an expected battle,

in order to produce in them that exaltation of animal power, and that fanatical ardour and courage, for which they are remarkable. When taken under ordinary circumstances, and in precisely the right dose, it will occasion agreeable sensations, enchanting reveries, and pleasures which are indescribable. It is well known that this remedy has been often abused for the purpose of creating supernatural appearances, visions, and other illusions, which have been ascribed to the agency of heavenly spirits. This subject might be extensively pursued; but, probably, enough has been brought forward to show the dependence of cerebral phenomena on the state of the brain; and to prove how much its manifestations may be disturbed by any irritation of the stomach—an organ peculiarly liable to this morbid state, from the variety of its own diseases, its extensive connexions, and its mischievous dietetic management.

V. Sympathy of the brain with *the liver*.

I shall here only just notice the influence of moral causes upon the functions of this organ, so that an excessive flow of bile does often result from the mere agitation of suspense or surprise; while the more powerful passions, such as anger, fear, terror, excessive joy, have

actually produced a fit of jaundice. Then again its reflected influence is very considerable; head-ache, and a countless variety of morbid mental manifestations, have frequently followed congestion of its vessels; and their removal has been coincident with its returning health: while, on the other hand, concussion of the brain has often given rise to inflammation, and even abscess of the liver. The well-ascertained influence of diseases of this organ in producing hypochondriasis, melancholy, and many other forms of vaporous irritation, is also proverbial, and tends to confirm our position, that its functional disturbance occasions a sympathetic disorder of the intellectual organ—not of the mind, but of the material medium through which it acts—possessing a specific character analogous with that which constitutes the primary irritation. In what this character consists we know not; nor is it necessary that we should know, since we seek not to define the nature of this influence, but merely to indicate its extent.

VI. Sympathies of the brain with the function of *secretion in general*.

We must pass over the influence of the kidneys, the spleen, and several other organs of the body: but as these are for the most part

secreting organs, we shall just notice the agency of the brain in producing secretion at all, and its reflex operation upon that viscus. This function very much depends upon the brain, and can be continued only so long as a due correspondence is kept up with that organ. But there are some secretions which conspicuously exhibit this law; that, for instance, of saliva under the influence of the excited imagination of food: on the opposite side, disgust for certain articles of diet will arrest the secretion, and produce dryness of the mouth. Again: the secretion of tears may be produced by two very opposite mental states—either of great sorrow or joy; and in both cases their flow seems to afford relief to an oppressed *brain*—the suffering organ of the mind. This is a matter of common observation, though its cause is not contemplated. Every one has experienced the temporary relief afforded by this secretion to a bursting heart; and there are few who have not rejoiced when they have witnessed tears come to the relief of an agonized bosom; for they know that a sorrow which can find an outlet in these natural expressions of grief, is less injurious than that deeply-concentrated feeling, which has no way of utterance, and in which the individual remains as isolated

from himself and others, and frequently falls a victim to cerebral disorder. This influence is also indirectly exerted upon the chest, so that the phrase of being “*stifled* with grief,” is often used to depict a state in which the oppressed bosom can scarcely free itself from its load, and is accompanied by a sense of stricture and tightness very commonly known; and which, in the nature of things, must depend upon cerebral influence. Parents are accustomed to act upon this principle, without knowing why, and without reasoning upon it: as, for instance, in the choice of a wet-nurse for their infant, they would look for one endued with a good share of equanimity, whose system was not liable to the agitation of tumultuous passion, and to moral affections of a debasing character; because the influence of these mental states upon the secretion of milk is known to be deleterious, and to render it improper for the nourishment of the infant; even if it do not still farther exert an unfortunate effect upon the infantile brain, and on the consequent manifestations of mind.

VII. Sympathies of the brain with *the muscular system*.

The influence of the brain on the muscles is conspicuous in several forms of malady, as well

as in their more simple healthy actions. They may be considered as agents to the brain, and absolutely incapable of their action without its continued energy imparted to them. A proof of this may be found in that state of a limb which is termed being "*asleep*." By pressure on the nerves, the communication with the brain has been intercepted ; and the individual *wills in vain* to move the limb : motion is impossible till the return of nervous influence, marked by the common sensation of "pins and needles," has restored the communication with the brain, and the muscles become again obedient to *the will*. Although from long habit these organs may appear to act without a distinct effort of volition, yet it is manifest that this really happens from the so-frequent repetition of cerebral actions, that the precise operation is performed without exciting the attention. If further proofs were needed of this position, they might be found in the enfeebled muscular power of old age, precisely accompanying enfeebled brainular energy ; in the complete loss of voluntary action attendant upon palsy ; in the partial absence of the influence of volition over one set of muscles, (as, for instance, the *flexors*, or *extensors* of a limb,) while it remains active upon the other ; in the debilitated muscular actions

arising from *any* source of irritation oppressing the brain, but particularly as a consequence of invading disease ; in the convulsions and other disordered muscular movements which attend many forms of cerebral disorder ; in the intimate sympathy which is known to exist between the different parts of the muscular system ; and in the ease with which many remote muscles are called into action, for the purpose of aiding, or of counteracting the influence of other muscles, in the performance of their salutary, or in controlling their morbid, actions ; and, above all, in the muscles of expression, those fruitful exponents of the varied emotions of mind. This is also demonstrated by the act of yawning, which is either a purely cerebral phenomenon, or indirectly such, through the agency of disordered stomach, or other suffering organ, irritating the brain. A similar disturbance of muscular power is visible in some diseases of the brain, as in epileptic and hysterical affections ; for it will be found, that in all these states, however they may be complicated with disorder of other important organs, yet that a morbid condition of the brain is the first link in the chain of unhealthy action.

Again : the development of *great* muscular power can scarcely consist with the perfect

integrity and energy of moral and intellectual manifestation. Only appreciate the influence of fatigue from lengthened muscular exertion, and it will be seen that the brain is unfitted for intellectual action : it is also impossible to think deeply during long-continued or rapid walking; and after great exertion repose is necessary, even for some days, before the brain can resume its accustomed power. Thus again, with regard to those who have devoted themselves to athletic pursuits, it will be remarked, that their weight of intellect and aptitude for moral feeling are very small ; and that their life is passed between eating, sleeping, and training. Only individuals of contracted intelligence will submit to sacrifice mental energy to the development of muscular power ; or will give up the hope of moral and intellectual excellence, in exchange for that which, at the very best, they can but enjoy in common with many of the inferior animals—namely, a superiority of physical power over the comparatively feeble and helpless. The man who thinks correctly—who really enjoys and desires the exquisite happiness which may be derived from the exercise of the nobler faculties of the immaterial spirit, and whose conscience tells him the importance of cultivating these faculties,

and the moral responsibility attaching to their possession,—can never hesitate, for a moment, respecting the duty and satisfaction of cultivating *talent*, and devoting it to the love and service of HIM who gave it. The two, in a very high degree, are incompatible ; because, if the animal brain receive an undue proportion of development, the intellectual manifestation will be starved and dwindled, after the same ratio ; thus proving the great importance of the organ, and its dependence for integrity upon other distant sympathies.

VIII. Sympathies of the brain with *the skin*.

I shall close this part of the inquiry with a remark or two on cerebral sympathy, as connected with the skin. At first sight, this may not appear a tangible or likely association ; and some who peruse these pages may imagine that greater importance than it deserves is given to the cerebral organ. And, indeed, there is often an obscurity enveloping these connexions, which makes it difficult to trace the exact mode of association. Yet the influence of moral emotion in producing that state of the surface which is familiarly called goose-skin ; the agency of fear in occasioning paleness of the countenance, by recalling the blood to the interior, or blueness

of the lips, from congestion in the extreme vessels ; the effect of shame and surprise, in giving rise to the blush which tinges the cheek of an innocent person, as well as deeply flushes the countenance of the consciously guilty ; the agency of suspense and agitation in occasioning perspiration ; the dryness of the skin which is so common an attendant upon mental anxiety ; the change of countenance from the impulsion of spiritual agony ; the alteration of its colour in those who really mourn, and the wrinkle of dissatisfaction which broods upon the forehead ;—are all proofs of intimate dependence between the two structures, and confirm the position that through these several organs the brain may be variously irritated, so as to produce a difference in the specific expression of its sufferings. This, too, is elucidated by the fact, that the brain suffers very differently from affections of different organs, according to peculiarities which we cannot trace, but which do actually exist.

There are some other very remarkable sympathies, but which are not so well suited to popular perusal ; and I therefore pass them over, in order, in the next chapter, to offer a few remarks on disorders of the cerebral function. In

the mean time, the following important results may be drawn from the present section of our inquiry.

1. The brain is placed in a state of sympathetic communion with many organs of the body : it rejoices in their health, and it suffers in their diseases ; and, moreover, it forms the link of communication between all these several organs, which unites them into one perfect whole ; so that if the action of any one be arrested, the whole are thrown into confusion.

2. The brain is exceedingly liable to be irritated by disturbance excited in any one of these distant organs. No disease of any kind can exist any where in the system,—no uneasiness, excess, or defect, in any one organ or function, but the brain suffers from it. And since it has been shown that the brain is the organ or instrument through which the manifestations of the mind are rendered cognisable, it is clear that these manifestations will be excited, altered, or impaired, by the state of the cerebral organ, which is the consequence of such irritation.

3. The peculiar character of such disturbance will be determined by the particular organ which forms the source of irritation ; and by the kind and degree of morbid action to which

it is exposed. It has been shown how closely the several organs of the body are united in sympathy to one common centre ; and how variously they affect that centre, according to their own peculiarities. But it will very seldom be found that this agency will be excited in a manner pure and uncombined ; for not only is each individual organ itself the seat of many healthy and morbid sympathies, but it is essentially connected with all the other organs of the body ; and its actions are variously modified by this connexion. Still, by this local primary disturbance, the effect propagated to the brain, and the subsequent reflex action of that viscus, are characterized, and do variously influence the manifestations of mind.

4. These facts should lead us to exercise tender compassion, in reference to those diseased manifestations of mind which so frequently cross our path. Let us recollect, that, though man is not a merely animal machine, the expression of his thoughts, feelings, reasoning, affections, and passions, is really influenced by the state of his body, and by any morbid action which may affect it. Let us hope, that many lesser peculiarities of conduct may depend upon the irritation of the organ of mind ; and though bodily temperament is not to be pleaded

as an excuse for moral obliquity, which a high exertion of Christian principle would have overcome, still let us learn to compassionate such sufferers as those I have described. Let the arm of mercy and forgiveness be outstretched towards them ; and let the active energy of real pity be willingly exercised to succour those whom we would consider as the wretched victims of disease, rather than as the voluntary agents of their own wanderings. Some of my readers can, perhaps, recollect having been vexed or irritated by persons, who at that time were considered of sane mind, but were afterwards obliged to be placed under restraint as lunatics ; and have said, “ I can now account for, and of course forgive and pity, many things which offended me in my friend’s conduct : it was, in fact, incipient derangement.” Now my object is to show that there is much of this incipient derangement in the world ; which, though it may never go beyond this earliest stage, is, in its degree, derangement still, and ought to be pitied and borne with as such. Of the extent of moral guilt in the individual I am not now speaking : this will depend upon the degree in which reason and conscience still retain their influence, the existing power of the

function of volition, and the effort made by the mind, according to its moral consciousness, to struggle with temptation. I merely add this remark, that I may not seem to any cursory reader to be offering an apology for moral pravity.

5. My last observation naturally leads to another; namely, that while we pity the infirmity of our neighbour, our scrutiny of ourselves ought to be rigid; for we should exercise a constant and uncompromising hostility to the influence of these sources of irritation. We must learn to excuse others, but we must not excuse ourselves: because we ought to resist every tendency to irritation; to watch over the first symptom of morbid manifestation; to seek support and guidance from on high; and in the strength of the Lord our God to come off more than conquerors. If the organ of mind be liable to irritation from a great number of bodily sources, God has also graciously given us a principle by which we are called upon to contend with these morbid tendencies; and it is our duty to strive against and overcome them.

6. But if this varied irritation should be so intense, or continue so long, as that the integrity of the brain should be destroyed, *it* will

then escape from the control of the presiding mind, and will continue to act without guidance and direction, producing the morbid manifestations of cerebral disorder, the next point to be noticed.

CHAPTER V.

Phenomena of disordered brainular function, and its influence on the manifestations of mind.—Sensorial feebleness or perversion;—great susceptibility;—hallucination;—unconquerable wakefulness;—change of intellectual and moral manifestations.

THE next step of our investigation is to consider the phenomena of disordered brainular function.

A great error has arisen, and has been perpetuated even to the present day, in considering cerebral disorder as *mental*; requiring, and indeed admitting, *only* of moral remedies, instead of these forming only *one* class of curative agents; whereas the brain is the mere *organ* of mind, not the mind itself; and its disorder of function arises from its ceasing to be a proper medium for the manifestation of the varied action and passion of the presiding spirit. And,

strange as it may seem, this error has been consecrated by a desire to escape from the fallacies of *materialism*.

Yet it is manifest that they alone are guilty of the charge of attachment to *materialism*, who consider the disorders of the cerebral function as *mental*; for then, indeed, the *brain* must be *mind itself*, and not simply its organ. When the stomach, or the liver, or the lungs, are affected with disease, some term is employed which at once leads the attention to the suffering viscus, and to the mode of its sufferings. But when we speak of disorder of the cerebral function, persons currently employ the terms mental alienation, fatuity, and various others which describe the *symptoms* of *cerebral* disease; but which do not lead the mind on to the affection of the organ which occasions them. This cause is generally very little understood, and often mistaken. But we must recollect, that the spiritual principle is not susceptible of disease—except speaking metaphorically; and therefore, we must refer the symptoms of morbid mental manifestation to their organic cause.

And if these *mental* manifestations always become disordered in a morbid condition of the brain, it is not too much to ask that other analogous phenomena should be referred to this

cause, which have sometimes been ascribed to spiritual agency, because the *altered manifestations* have not been contemplated as a consequence of disease of the manifesting organ : and, if this be granted, it will not be too much to ask further, that those morbid manifestations of mind, which *can* be traced to disease of the material organ, should be permitted to guide us into the same route of explanation as respects other deviations from healthy mental agency, which may not so clearly be associated with disease of structure.

Cerebral disorder is characterized by certain symptoms, which, in prosecuting this inquiry, it is important to consider. We will first take an example of the simplest form of disturbance ; namely, slight tendency to congestion in the vessels of the brain. The patient awakens with difficulty ; he is desirous of sleeping beyond his usual time ; he dresses with an oppression upon his brow, which constitutes that operation a burden ; he remains languid and feeble all the morning ; there is a sense of weight in his head, which he cannot shake off ; he is still drowsy and indisposed for exertion : the hour of dinner arrives—and the stimulus occasioned by this meal drives the blood through the congested vessels ; re-action is produced ;

the sense of weight is lost, and it is superseded by head-ache of a more or less acute character; by restlessness, and a variety of fidgetty sensations; and if the pain should subside (as it very commonly does) towards evening, and frequently under the controlling influence of *green tea*, still there is a great degree of irritability, and the patient retires to rest in a state of morbid wakefulness, which is not overcome for hours; and he then falls into the same heavy, unrefreshing sleep, which occasions a repetition of similar congestion; to be again removed by the same re-action, and to return in a similar circle till the morbid condition has been relieved.

But what is the effect of this state upon the manifestations of mind? All the morning the subject of brainular alteration is incapable of intellectual exertion; his spirits are depressed, and his powers of thought inadequate. To this mental cloud succeeds a transient brightening of the faculties, which is suspended by acute pain, and is afterwards characterized by an impossibility of fixing the attention, until towards evening, when a greater degree of serenity is produced, and the patient probably conduces to his approaching wakefulness by mental occupation; which now, no longer a

burden, goes on cheerily. Now unless we are wilfully blind, do we not see that the manifestations of mind are under the influence of this peculiar though most simple cerebral disorder? and, if so, may there not be other morbid conditions of the brain, perhaps unknown or unexplained, and, with our present knowledge, inexplicable, which may give rise to varied deviations from healthy mental manifestation, to visions, spectral illusions, hallucinations, apparitions, and similar phenomena?

The infinite wisdom of the Creator has so appointed, that the brain can bear much injury with impunity. And it is astonishing to contemplate the degree of mischief which will sometimes go on in its structure without being rendered very obvious by bodily or mental symptoms. By what constitution of the organ this has been effected is beyond our knowledge, and we seek not to explain it: but we see the fact; and we would derive from it a lesson of adoring gratitude to that holy Being, whose infinite knowledge has prepared for the operations of mind an organ of such exquisite delicacy and susceptibility; and yet one which can bear with comparative impunity a greater degree of lesion than many other less important

viscera. But although this is sometimes the case; yet cerebral disorder is generally marked by some of the following appearances.

1. Feebleness, or suspension, or perversion of the intimations afforded by the organs of sense.

Mere mental emotion will occasion the tongue to be furred in a few minutes; vision will be rendered indistinct, and the hearing obtuse; an emotion of a more powerful kind will suspend the action of the senses altogether: while, under other circumstances, it will so completely pervert them, as that the taste shall be depraved; the ear shall be assailed by a thousand forms of unreal impression; spectral images shall float before the eye; the nose shall be occupied by odours which do not exist, and relative feeling shall be disturbed. Precisely similar effects will often be produced from an impression of primary disease of the brain; so that in either case of disorder of that organ, whether it may claim a physical or mental *origin*, we are prepared for *perverted manifestations of mind*.

2. We notice, in the next place, the extreme susceptibility of these organs. The taste becomes developed in an unusual degree; so that the simple contact of many bodies with the

tongue will instantaneously produce sickness, and bring on all those associated actions which have *primarily* commenced in irritation of the brain: hearing will be rendered so acute that the slightest vibrations of the atmosphere will seem to the patient as thunder, and he will be incapable of listening without pain to the gentlest movements in his room: the eye will abhor its usual grateful stimulus, light, and will court the completest obscurity: while both these senses will be rendered so irritable, that voices will be heard, and forms will be seen, where neither the one nor the other ever existed. The sense of smelling will be offended by odours which are not in themselves disagreeable; and the skin will be so susceptible, that it will feel soreness and pain from the slightest impressions; its functions will be interrupted; it will be chilled by cold or fevered by heat, or unnaturally perspiring; while it will cease to convey correct impressions, from the morbid excitability of its surface. Can it be surprising that, under many circumstances of invading disease, and while the brain is suffering from its oppression, this extreme susceptibility should operate in producing illusions? For we are frail and feeble creatures, composed of body and mind; and we have no access to

external circumstances for the latter, except through the intervention of the former.

3. But, thirdly, another expression of cerebral disorder consists in hallucination. This manifestation of mental operation very frequently arises from the former: a perverted image is conveyed through the senses, and represented to the mind; in consequence of the high degree of susceptibility of the brain, this impression is brooded over: it is frequently recalled even during sleep; it is associated with other impressions, and grouped with them in some fancied order of perverted and fantastic arrangement, and it becomes so overbearing a sensation, that the patient is convinced of its reality, and carried away by its reiterated impulse. At another time, the brain forms for itself these delusive images from the involuntarily recollected frusta of previous impressions, and their very natural, but not always coherent, associations; and thus its action becomes perverted: it ceases to listen to the notices conveyed by the external senses, by means of which its internal impressions might have been compared and adjusted; the voice of judgment is not heard, and the patient is absorbed by the certainty of his erroneous impressions, and verily believes in the exist-

ence of the fancied offspring of a disordered imagination. In this state actual feelings are disregarded; the morbid images supply their place, and are contemplated as the positive results of sensation. The natural laws of intellect are now superseded; the brain is no longer the obedient servant of the mind; but, in the tyranny of its usurpation, subjugates the reasoning powers, and compels them to yield to that human infirmity, which attaches itself to the grand prevailing cause that has marred the most perfect creation of Omnipotence, and has rendered that which was originally "very good," now "very far gone from original righteousness."

These hallucinations may be very fugitive, especially at the commencement of cerebral disease; and a powerful appeal to the mind, judiciously applied, may recal it to the influence of right reason. But if disease should continue, it will soon relapse into the same or similar trains; and if it should advance, or increase in intensity, this hallucination may become permanent, and it will then form delirium or insanity. These hallucinations will frequently commence during sleep, and the patient, on rousing from that state, cannot be convinced of their illusion; they remain with

the energy of waking impressions, and often become motives to conduct; and at all events form the groundwork for morbid reasoning. Here, however, we are treading too closely on the subject of visions, which will come to be considered more especially hereafter.

4. Another result of cerebral disorder, is that of unconquerable wakefulness. A ceaseless vigilance attacks the patient, and sleep seems to have fled for ever from his eyelids. It is astonishing how long a period will sometimes be passed without repose; and so great are the attendant restlessness and irritability, that they are often beyond the control of medicine: nay more, the primary stimulus of opium seems to increase them in a degree far greater than can be quieted by its subsequent sedative effects; while the application of an ice-cap, to cool the fevered brain, will prove the most efficacious remedy. For days and weeks together the patient will never sleep, and, during the whole time, will talk incessantly. And yet, such is the wisdom of the Almighty Architect in protecting this organ of the mind, that it will not have eventually suffered from this protracted irritation, in a degree at all commensurate with that which would have been produced by the same excited ac-

tion in other organs of the body. It will be seen, however, at a glance, how favourable must be this state of irritability, to the production and indulgence of morbid sensorial and intellectual impressions; and then it may be inferred how easily this same state would be induced by a *degree* of the same cause, existing for any length of time,—but not so great as to be called disease,—escaping attention under the terms of “restless nights,” and of a “bad sleeper,” till the morbid results have so far accumulated as to be uncontrollable. This form of great excitement *may* be followed by collapse, and destruction of the brain; or it may be rapidly succeeded by congestion, and by a tendency to heavy sleep from which the patient can scarcely be aroused; and from which, if left to himself, this very congestion may terminate in lethargy, apoplexy, or other of the deepening shades of cerebral disorder.

5. But there are indications of brainular malady, which we must mention particularly, as they affect the intellectual and moral manifestations. One of the first symptoms to be remarked, is an inaptitude for intellectual employment: the patient requires a frequent change of pursuit; he cannot turn his attention steadily to one object; he cannot reason or

think consecutively ; he finds it impossible to fix his thoughts upon the reasoning of others ; his desk and his books are neglected ; and he himself is occupied with the veriest trifles, rendered important, in his estimation, by their association with some perverted images. Moreover, if he has contrived to fix his attention, he soon becomes fatigued ; thus showing, that however the brain may on some occasions be disposed for over-action, it has not the power of supporting it, but rather that it exhausts itself by attempting to accomplish that to which it is utterly inadequate.

Again, there is a susceptibility to moral impression, and a disposition to impulsive action, which show that the patient is not to be depended upon. Reason with him, convince his judgment, see his resolution fully taken, apparently with all the immoveable determinateness of conscious right ; leave him to act upon these convictions, and the first wave of new impression, or even the recurrence of an old one, will have dissipated all his firmness, and he acts in a way diametrically opposed to that on which he had resolved. There exists in him so intense and craving a desire after sensation, that it is of little consequence whether it may be right or wrong, so it be but

sensation; only, if one morbid train of ideas shall have become predominant, it will be certain of claiming its supremacy, as soon as the patient gains time to listen to its suggestions.

This supreme agency of one dominant idea is manifested in the history of A.B., which is also mentioned in this place as affording an apt illustration of the progress of cerebral disorder. Family predisposition existed towards insanity; the grandmother, the father, and the sister, had been subject to some one of the varied forms of mental aberration. But surrounded by affluence, and apparent comfort of every kind, A.B. had reached his sixtieth year without being exposed to the operation of exciting circumstances. It then happened, that moral causes, of a deeply painful nature, and connected with emotions of intense interest, characterized also by a depressing tendency, assailed the patient: on these he brooded, till the brain became irritated by the unnatural goading and oppression, and *then* a slight deviation from regular habits was observed. But now morbid action had taken place in the room of family predisposition, and the brain became the increasing source of disordered mental manifestation. The fear of poverty was the prominent idea, and the pos-

essor of very large and valuable landed property, as well as from many other sources, suddenly became, in his own estimation, not worth a shilling, and the only prospect before him was that of interminable imprisonment. To reason with him was unavailing; for although at my professional visits I would demonstrate to him, upon his own showing, that he was worth many, very many hundreds a-year, yet inevitable ruin impended over him; cerebral disorder increased; irritation of the brain became more conspicuous; other insane ideas were added to the dread of penury, which however always remained supereminent; and, after a short and a painful attendance, I was summoned one morning in great haste, and learned that he had found means for a single minute to elude the vigilance of his attendant, and was a corpse by his own hands. For the last act of his life, doubtless, he was not responsible; but let us learn a lesson of usefulness from this melancholy relation.

In the first place, we see the germ of disease, the origin of cerebral irritation, in the influence of moral causes, and the subsequent history shows that, even in this life, the path of sin is one of unmingled bitterness and misery; it has its providentially ordained punishment, and

though we would be far from limiting the mercy of God, and though we would hope that lucid intervals may be devoted to repentance, humiliation, and prayer, yet we cannot but see that irritation of the brain, and the paroxysm of insanity, must be fearful barriers in the way of seeking God, and turning to him with full purpose of heart. May we watch and pray to be preserved from sin, and all its awful consequences ! The Holy Spirit will not always strive with man : may we be saved from tempting that Spirit to depart from us, or from provoking our long-suffering Creator to leave us to an afflictive dispensation, which goes far to quench the light of spiritual life in the soul, by shutting it out through the material veil of diseased organization.

Secondly, let us observe, that that which originated in moral causes was continued and extended by the disordered action of the brain ; and that then other manifestations of mind became perverted ; false premises and inferences usurped the dominion of mind : the patient at length ceases to be an accountable agent, and closes a life of misery in the most melancholy manner ; for if we deprecate sudden death at all times, how much more the death of the suicide !

Thirdly, we notice that the brain being once disordered, there is no setting bounds to the distorted images which it will produce, or to the creation of its wild associations.

And, fourthly, let us learn the value of religious principle: this would have saved the victim from the first cause of brainular irritation; it would have offered a healing balm in the all-powerful blood of Christ, even after that irritation had commenced, and would have led to peace and reconciliation with God; and even after insanity had been produced, could the bodily disease have been subdued, or could the hope of the Gospel have been embraced by the mind during a lucid interval, it would have given that best medicine, which might have confirmed the results of physical treatment, and afforded a prospect of permanent peace to the wretched sufferer.

CHAPTER VI.

Same subject continued.—Early and slight changes of character accompanying this state;—varied influence upon the bodily functions;—intermittent or remittent character of its maladies;—epilepsy;—possession;—causes producing this state;—original malconformation;—wounds;—concussion;—compression;—fever;—local inflammation;—the entire class of nervous diseases;—hypochondriasis;—general inferences.

BUT again: perhaps long before the symptoms are fairly cognizable, there is a slight change of character, or manner, or habit, which ought always to excite alarm on the part of friends; as, for instance, where the prudent suddenly become prodigal; or the mild and benevolent, vindictive; or the good-tempered, morose; or the cheerful desponding; or where the manner of confiding openness is exchanged for distrust or suspicion; or the reserved become accessible; or the taciturn loquacious; or where habits of retirement have been superseded by a love of company, or, on the contrary, a desire after

society has given place to habits of seclusion, and abstraction from mankind: in fact, whenever, in any way, a deviation from original and established character is observed, then let cerebral disorder be suspected, and it will almost always be found. As it proceeds, and as the shadows of departing reason are deepened, delirium will be noticed as a frequent accompaniment; sometimes only as a transient symptom for a few moments; at others prolonging its insidious visitation, varying very much as to character, from the determined and exclusive raving of the monomaniac, to the ever-shifting mutability of him who wanders hither and thither, without object, without end, without guide, and without purpose.

As disorder of the brain advances, there may be increasing mental darkness proceeding to a total suspension of intelligence; and the individual becomes a mere wreck of himself; his glory has departed from him, and he has exhibited the most pitiable example of the wrath of the offended Majesty of heaven against sin. Yet, be it remembered, the case is not hopeless; and even this state of misery and destitution admits of relief. The wretched victim of cerebral disorder may yet be restored to himself, to society, to his duties, and to the enjoyment of

intellectual pleasures, as well as to the pursuit of moral worth : but by what means ? Not by any process of reasoning—not by moral suasion—not by didactic appeals to his understanding, or by an impression upon his feelings—not by all the arts of rhetoric, the efforts of education, or even, while in that state, the impressiveness of religious motive ;—all these would of themselves be utterly unavailing ; but by *remedial measures*, directed, not to the spiritual principle, which is *not* diseased, but to its organ which *is* ; in fact, addressed to the brain, with all its variously-associated sympathies.

But we proceed to show, that cerebral disorder, and diseased manifestation of mind, are connected with other *bodily* effects, which cannot in truth be referred to any other than a bodily cause. Thus, for instance, we may mention the great variety of muscular affections which attend the several forms of malady now under consideration ; beginning with the simplest disturbance of the dance of St. Vitus, and terminating with that wretched state of suffering, in which the patient is doubled up upon himself, and scarcely retains the form of a human being. Among these also, may be reckoned, feebleness and diminution of the power of the will over the voluntary motions,

involuntary actions, tremors, general palsy, palsy of only one half of the body, convulsions, irritation of only one set of muscles, and paralysis of their antagonists, as of the flexor and extensor muscles of a limb, all the varieties of cramp, and, above all, the peculiar expression of the countenance, arising from the constant and exclusive employment of certain muscles to embody the feelings and views. But if all these bodily effects be readily traced to irritation of the brain, it must surely be allowed, that these same disturbances, from whatever cause arising, will exert a reflex influence upon the cerebral organ, and tend to place it in a very unfit state for intellectual integrity of manifestation, and one in which it will be easily excited to morbid sympathy.

Lastly, we shall notice the intermittent or remittent character of the brain's maladies; such as in epilepsy, hysteria, and other diseases, more especially belonging to the nervous system. Now this attribute cannot surely be ascribed to the influence of a spiritual immaterial principle; which in itself, as a cause of disease, cannot admit of change, of paroxysm, of increased mischief, and again of improvement. It is true that these diseases have been referred to distant sympathies; but the brain is evidently

their real source. It must be remembered, also, that epilepsy has been ascribed to *possession*, and even at the present day, an impression of this kind exists in the mind of the vulgar. I have been frequently told that such and such an epileptic individual was "*overseen*;" nor can we blame these results of superstition among the vulgar, while their superiors in intellect and acquirement continue to refer *similar* effects to mental agency. The influence of epilepsy upon the brain is such, as in its progress to destroy altogether the manifestations of mind, and to produce a hideous expression of the countenance, usually *a peculiar grin*, which, with minds predisposed to such explanation, it would not be difficult to imagine *Satanić*; but which is manifestly the result of the organ having been rendered unfit for the manifestations of mind: and the semi-human expression of involuntary laughter remains to tell the sad tale of what sin has wrought. But in this case will it be said, that the soul is the seat of disease? Surely not! And if not, if disease of brain can produce a perfect obliteration of mental manifestation, it may be permitted also to occasion its *perversion*, and to give rise to those *unreal images which have been called apparitions*.

Before we conclude this part of our inquiry,

we must notice some of the causes producing diseased manifestations of mind.

1. *Original malconformation* will give rise to idiotcy. Instances have occurred which show that without brain there can be no manifestation of mind : and in old age, that organ undergoes a change which shuts out the operations of the mind from being perceived. But can it be believed that the idiot has no soul ? or that the feebleness of old age extinguishes the powers of the spiritual principle, at a period when it is fast approaching its glorious change of immortality ; or that the humble, faithful servant of God is liable to disease of spirit, just as he is actually entering the confines of the heavenly world ? No : the brain may be diseased or enfeebled, but the soul can be subject only to one moral taint, for which a remedy has been provided. A similar effect will sometimes be produced, in some cases, by water on the brain.

2. Wounds of the brain will occasion a variety of morbid symptoms, differing too according to the precise portion of brainular structure which has become the subject of injury ; thus demonstrating, so far as demonstration is possible, the dependence of mental manifestation on brainular integrity.

3. Concussion of the brain will produce gid-

diness, sickness, a complete loss of power and of recollection, and generally a suspension of the manifestations of mind. These symptoms may be so intense as to occasion death; and if not, they will be followed by a reaction, which will be attended by inflammation, delirium, or insanity. Still, by the blessing of God, under a judicious management, there is an ultimate restoration to the state of health. It is also probable that sea-sickness and sick-headache both owe their origin to some irritation of the brain.

4. Compression of this organ, from whatever cause arising, and however slight in degree, will produce, according to its intensity, more or less alteration, and even extinction, of mental manifestation; and when that compression is suddenly relieved, there will sometimes be an immediate return to health, but more generally it will be through a series of perverted manifestations.

5. The state of fever will occasion large deviations from healthy brainular function. These will vary materially according as the febrile condition shall partake more or less of the inflammatory character; as it shall be more or less characterized by debility or oppression; as it shall be marked by symptoms of a peculiar

nature ; or as it shall more evidently depend upon the morbid structure of some particular organ, and assume the form of decided hectic. In all these states, however, one feature is to be uniformly found ; namely, that of perverted mental manifestation : visions are seen which have no reality, but which are firmly believed by the patient, who maintains them as never doubting their existence ; persons and things appear and act and talk as they would do under the supposed circumstances, and the patient will consistently relate that such has been the case. Now let it be recollected, that we have here traced apparitions of one kind, visions, &c., to a *bodily-morbid* cause ; and if this be indisputable, it can scarcely be denied, that *all* other supernatural appearances *may* be referred to some *similar* or *analogous* cause.

6. Local inflammation of a slow character, and consequent disorganization, must be enumerated as another cause of the perversion of mental manifestation, and of the more or less complete destruction of intellectual power.

7. The whole class of nervous diseases contribute to impair, and, under extreme circumstances, to destroy the manifestations of mind. We are well aware, that nervous disorders have been often ascribed to fancy ; and, from the facility

with which they may be simulated, this is likely to be the case in some instances : but still no rational person will deny that the nervous system is liable to disease ; and that it produces great distress when so disturbed. None but persons who have thus suffered, or who have witnessed such sufferings, can imagine the misery which it induces, on the perversions of intellect, feeling, perception, and judgment, to which it gives rise. This state may be very transient, or it may continue for years ; it may be suspended by a powerful impression upon the system, or it may resist every remedial measure ; it may be called into action by mental emotion, or bodily disturbance : it may be opposed by a powerful effort of the will ; but it will be cured only by that which relieves the source of irritation, and then gives tone to those nerves to prevent their too great susceptibility. How is this to be accounted for, on the supposition of merely mental agency ?

The converse of this proposition is further illustrated by the good effects of cold applied to the head. Wherever there is irritation, thither will blood be determined, and congestion, or inflammatory action, will be the result. In persons so predisposed to cerebral excitement, great advantage will accrue from the

application to the head of cold water, suffered to evaporate, which operates in diminishing increased action; carrying off heat as one cause of stimulation; subduing sensibility by its directly sedative influence; relieving fulness and tension, by its condensing effect upon the blood; and preventing congestion, by giving that degree of tone to the vessels that they will not readily yield to the impulse of the blood, or allow themselves to be distended by it. The good effects of cold applied to the head, in diminishing the excitement arising from wine, or other alcoholic stimulus, is well known to those who take too much habitually: yet we see that the use of this means presupposes a *bodily* organ in a state of irritation, and is only adapted to relieve the phenomena of mind, by operating on the material medium through which its manifestations are made.

Lastly: we will only further notice a few of the different phases of hypochondriasis. It was formerly supposed, that this malady depended upon a merely disordered state of the digestive organs; and it may be so in some instances. But often, where this is the case, it is only that these organs form the first link in the chain of disturbance, and that, irritating a too susceptible brain, they produce phenomena which are

purely cerebral. Generally it will be found, that the brain is primarily affected, and that the digestive organs only suffer from the interruption of a due and regular supply of nervous influence. It is true, that moral causes do generally occasion and characterize hypochondriasis; and they do so by their disturbing operation upon the organ appointed for their manifestation. Thus it will be found, that grief, fear, shame, ennui, and disappointment, become the frequent sources of hypochondriasis: and it will be acknowledged, that these all agree as to their action; namely, that of exciting a depressing influence upon the brain. This depression enfeebles its energies, allows congestion to take place, and the consequent irritable reaction arises from the disturbance created by such circumstances.

Let us not doubt, or underrate the sufferings of the hypochondriac, or fancy that he himself might remedy them if he would: he has lost the power of the will over his mental manifestations, and he has become feeble, capricious, changeful, and irritable. One of the first and most remarkable symptoms about the hypochondriac, is *the loss of sleep*: should he even feel drowsy beforehand, no sooner does he place his head upon his pillow, than sleep quits

his eyelids, and seems to mock his wooing ; an irritability of brain is produced, which is not easily overcome : in this case, too, opium very frequently fails to induce sleep, because of the state of cerebral excitement which the narcotic cannot subdue, and therefore cannot produce that congested state of its vessels through the medium of which it operates in procuring sleep. And since it fails of its effect, it tends to excite and irritate an already-irritated brain, and to increase the symptoms it was intended to relieve. It will be found, also, that this increased action of the cerebral circulation, is attended by headache, and by the perversion of the mental manifestations ; sustained attention is impossible ; perception is clouded on the one hand, or morbidly acute on the other : memory is lost, so that the patient does not recollect what he has said ten minutes before ; nor will he remember ten minutes hence that which is now enjoined. His judgment is feeble, erring, fallacious ; his will changed at every instant, and by every changing impression. Now, whence these perverted manifestations ? Is it that the spiritual principle is diseased ? Rather is it not that its organ has ceased to be subservient to its purposes ?

Moreover, the senses of the hypochondriac

are endowed with an extreme degree of sensibility, or they are liable to frequent hallucinations, or they become depraved. Thus, for instance, he *hears voices*, and receives admonitions; he *sees visions*, and is often assailed by *unearthly visitants*: he perceives around him objects which have no real existence: he acquires a fondness for substances in themselves disgusting: his feeling is unusually acute: above all, his skin becomes morbidly sensitive to changes of temperature: a stream of cold air is as death to his comforts: and he is particularly excited and irritable during the prevalence of an atmosphere highly charged with electrical matter. Again: he forms false estimates of himself and his circumstances; he is convinced that he suffers the agonies of impending dissolution: at one time, his heart, he thinks, is oppressed with blood; it is stagnated there, and the organ can beat no longer; at another, he cannot breathe; and again, at a third, his stomach is worn out; or other fancies. That these are really hallucinations, is manifest from the healthy state of the organs alleged to be diseased; from the frequent change of the viscus said to be affected; and from the kind and degree of indisposition. Moreover, the extreme inquietude of hypochondriacs re-

specting their health ; the fear of one lest he be touched, because his body is composed of glass, and is so brittle that the slightest touch may occasion its destruction ; the dread of another to go from home, because his body being a grain of barley he fears he shall be consumed by the chickens ; the hopeless deprecation of the Divine vengeance by another, and the fruitlessness of reasoning in all such cases, to produce more just convictions ; together with the advantage resulting from medicine and discipline,—all show the importance of attending to the brain. This conclusion is confirmed by the patients' frequent change of humour and expression ; their overweening cordiality or suspicion—their varying mode of expression—the feebleness and changefulness of their purposes—the general timidity of their character—their particular pusillanimity and fearfulness—their irascibility without adequate cause—the restlessness of their pursuits—their frequent morose reception of intended kindness—and their unprovoked jealousy,—all prove the extent to which the brain, as the organ of mind, has suffered, and show the importance of making this the first object of our attention. And if it were necessary to accumulate proofs, they might be found in the frequent disturbance of the mus-

cular system and loss of power, amounting even to partial palsy.

It is possible, that when existing only in a slight extent, this cerebral excitation may communicate a considerable degree of activity to the intellectual operations during a certain portion of time; but in a more advanced state of the malady, the brain becomes unequal to the discharge of its functions: and thus the ideas become confused, disconnected, inconsequent, too tardy or too rapid: the mental manifestation is languid, or is excited to transient action which produces no result; the ideas become unreasonable; the sensations fallacious; and occasional delirium or absolute insanity closes the long train of morbid cerebral manifestation.

From this review of the influence of cerebral disorder, we shall only infer, that a certain state of brainular malady always produces disordered manifestations of mind: that disordered *manifestations* of mind may be always traced back to functional disease of its organ: and that in such states the most unreal images are presented to the mind of the patient, with a degree of impressiveness, which supersedes the power of reason, and the influence of judgment, and gives them all the attributes of simple and sober truth.

Thus, then, we trust it has been proved,—

That the organ through which the mind acts is material, and that it is liable to be affected by physical causes :

That it is subject to different kinds and degrees of irritation, according to the particular organ which is disturbed, and which forms the first link in the chain of morbid action :

That the manifestations of mind will be proportionally disordered, and will partake of the peculiarity of this organic derangement: And,

That the brain, being once overpoised from its triple balance of physical, intellectual, and moral agency, perversion of action will be the consequence: and that, escaping the guidance of the will, it will continue to act on without direction, and will become liable to be deceived by disordered mental manifestations, which do in fact result only from a loss of the balance of power: whether this may have been occasioned by primary or secondary physical irritation—by the overstrained employment of the brain in literary pursuit,—or by the influence of powerful and exclusive emotion.

The very great difference in the symptoms of several of these morbid states, arising apparently from the same source of disease, would lead us to suspect that the brain must be liable to individual inappreciable peculiarities, which give

their impression to its morbid as well as to its healthy manifestations ; and a little consideration will show us, that this arises from a law of Nature's, which has stamped this diversity of operation upon that organ.

It is this alone which will account for the infinite diversity of *original* character ; that unsophisticated expression of mind which is visible before it has been influenced by education, and the various agencies of social life. No two individuals are precisely alike : even in the same family, there is a striking difference between its several branches ; family resemblance may be handed down, to a certain extent, from generation to generation ; yet in each, there will be a variety of mental manifestation, which constitutes peculiar character, even as the features of the countenance serve to distinguish those whose near alliance may entitle them to the possession of general likeness ; and to maintain the consciousness of personal identity.

In what then does this difference consist, and how is it produced ? Is it mental or physical ? does it originate with the great God, the Creator of the ends of the earth, or may it be accounted for on natural principles ? We adopt unhesitatingly the latter alternative ;—since, if we did not do so,—if we asserted the peculia-

urity to be *mental*, it must be communicated from the almighty Fountain of goodness, who gives to man a reasonable soul, and who thus becomes the author of all the natural obliquities and perversions of spiritual manifestation;—a consequence too blasphemous to be tolerated.

On the other hand, we believe every gift of God to be *good*, and the soul of man, as emanating from him, to be pure and holy;—it becomes prone to evil by its alliance with *materiality*—with that fallen nature upon which the influence of sin has been soprominently impressed;—and then its manifestations assume the tinge of the *material medium* appointed for their expression; and individual peculiarity is accounted for upon the same principle with the distinctive attributes of other animals. The only difference is this, that man has within him a spiritual presiding principle, and that all his animal propensities are subjected to its influence; and therefore he is responsible for every act, and thought, and feeling, and expression.—Originally he had power to choose the good, and refuse the evil; and although now he has lost that power in his own strength, and sin reigns in his mortal body, and his mental manifestations are debased,—yet a remedy has been provided in the atoning sacrifice of Christ, and in

the promised aid of the Holy Spirit. Now all these varied influences—animal peculiarity, difference of social relation, education, opportunity, custom and habit, advantages of religious instruction, the abandonment or the reception of moral sanctions, the acceptance or the rejection of the proffered offers of mercy, and the degree in which the heart is under the guidance of religious motive and principle—will sufficiently explain the diversities of present character.

But if so, these diversities have been shown to consist not in *variety of spiritual essence*, but *of the material medium through which its manifestations are made*;—and this again explains the infinite variety of its morbid actions.

CHAPTER VII.

Phenomena of sleep, and its morbid states ;—its physiological laws ;—its morbid conditions ;—waking dreams or reveries ;—nightmare ;—dreams.

THE next stage of our inquiry, in proceeding from the more simple to the more complicated results, will be to glance a little at the physiological phenomena of *sleep* ; but more particularly to consider its morbid states.

It would be right, were it possible, to define, in the first instance, in what consists simple, natural, healthy sleep, before we proceed to describe its pathological conditions, in order that the exact amount of the latter might be estimated by contrasting them with the former : but here, again, we find a limit placed to our investigation ; for it is an inexplicable boon provided for the weary and the wayworn by the beneficent Creator, and so essentially interwoven

with the constitution, as to be inseparable from its well-being, and to form a *vital* action, the precise nature of which is unknown. Its influence is a fundamental law impressed upon animal life; and all bow to its agency; but we know not why. It is the offspring of life, and, like its parent, is difficult, perhaps impossible, to be defined; and we must be contented with the scanty information we can obtain of its natural phenomena, and of the many deviations from its healthy state. In fact, it is far easier to say what it is not, than to describe wherein it consists.

It is, however, important to remark, that it is not a state of absolute quiescence; for many organs of the body will continue to act on during sleep; and, indeed, will be possessed of a greater degree of activity than is customary, precisely because the intellectual function is less employed. Thus, all the processes on which the continuance of life depends, go on uninterruptedly: the beating of the heart, and the heaving of the chest, are visible and tangible; the process of digestion is even more completely performed during sleep, than in the waking state, because more nervous energy can be then accumulated about the stomach than can be spared for the individual wants of this

organ at a period when it is distributed among a variety of active functions. But let it be asked, *whence* is this continued supply of nervous energy derived? If from the brain, *it* surely must be one of those organs which does not enter into complete repose during sleep; and, admitting this, we shall be prepared to account for many of the disturbed phenomena of that process.

The brain continues its unwearied action during sleep; but many of its intellectual manifestations are laid aside, or are so obscured by this state as not to be cognizable. It should seem that as an intellectual organ it was more liable to exhaustion, than as a merely corporeal agent; and that, therefore, sleep had been provided more particularly for the repose of the intellectual brain; and this opinion is supported by the fact, that fatigue is induced much earlier when bodily exertion is accompanied by mental effort or emotion; more especially if that emotion be of a depressing character. A consequence of this law is, that in sleep the brain ceases to be the servant of the mind, or spiritual principle, and is no longer obedient to the will. For, as wakefulness may be defined to be a state of the brain in which the exercise of its functions is submitted to the will, with a

consciousness of such submission ; so sleep is the opposite state, during which there is a suspension of all possible intellectual action ; and the entire brainular function is no longer under the influence of the will, nor in any way subjected to its control.

Thus, sleep is provided for the restoration of the nervous system ; and in its most healthy form is of a light character, and easily disturbed ; the brain, immediately upon awakening, entering upon the full tide of its functions. The reason is obvious, and shows the infinite wisdom of that Creative Power which has surrounded us with wonders. During sleep, man is in a defenceless state ; and if it were not easily disturbed, he would not be aware of the approach of danger ; nor in an instant capable of taking the necessary precautionary measures of escape or defence. This is easily seen by watching the heavy slumber of an oppressed brain, and the sudden wakening, not to the energy of action, but to dulness and stupidity of perception, and to generally feeble or perverted manifestations. The repose of the brain is often incomplete ; and then, though the organ be wholly or partially abstracted from the influence of the will, it nevertheless continues a certain kind of action, without the guidance and

direction of the judgment : unrefreshing sleep is the result, and its subject rises in the morning wearied, with enfeebled powers of the body, and with greatly diminished capacity for the manifestations of mind.

The arrival of sleep may be evaded for a considerable time, by various stimuli ; but after a certain interval, longer or shorter according to the idiosyncrasy of the individual, nature claims her prerogative : her voice *will be heard* ; and the invasion of sleep becomes irresistible. But when it takes place under such circumstances, it is generally oppressive, and does not recruit exhausted power, since the brain has been irritated by previous excitants ; and when itself, or any of the organs with which it stands connected, are in a state of irritation, quiet sleep is not to be expected.

As the invasion of sleep may thus be warded off for a considerable time by the agency of various stimuli, so a state of *morbid vigilance* may be produced by certain conditions of the brain, and by various other exciting causes. Thus, *acute irritation* of the brain, even when attended by power on the part of the constitution will produce it. Opium exhibited for this purpose will occasion it. In the opposite state of the system, in which excitation is produced without power

to support it, the degree of nervous irritability will be such as to render sleep impossible, till calm has been obtained ; and the same effects will originate from the agency of green-tea, coffee, and other stimulants. Now it is quite impossible that *these causes*, to which many others might be added, can all agree in the possession of *one common property*, by which wakefulness is produced ; or that the vigilance so created can admit of a similar treatment.

But if not, the brain may be variously irritated by various disturbing causes : and these causes may operate effects upon its physiological function with which we are at present unacquainted ; because we know not the manner in which the connexion between the brain and its distant associated organs is carried on, and therefore we cannot ascertain the mode in which it is disturbed, while this very mode constitutes the essential character of morbid vigilance. It is sufficient for us to ascertain that the brain is excited by various, and even opposite causes ; and that these causes produce effects varying in kind, and differing in degree, though they are all uniform in disturbing the manifestations of mind.

We must attend more particularly to some of the morbid states of sleep : and, first, of *waking*

dreams, or reveries. To many persons there is something so pleasing in the semi-unconsciousness which this state involves, that they indulge it, for the sake of enjoying the gratification it affords.

Reverie consists in dissociating the mind from such external circumstances as would tend to fix and controul its operations; and thus creating for itself images of interest, and grouping them together so as to produce various emotions; and in imagining situations for action or passion often impossible, and generally monstrous or improbable. Here there are no impediments in the way; for every difficulty is subdued by the powerful agency of a lawless imagination. In this state the patient is often unconscious of all that passes around him: he is called absent—that is, he does not attend to external realities, because such attention would break the charm of reverie by which he remains spell-bound—yet without the slightest consciousness of being so.

Now, let it be remarked, that here is continued action of the brain, without the support of volition or the influence of judgment; and that in this state, unreal images are presented to the mind with all the semblance of truth and reality. The brain, then, when left to it-

self, in consequence of the disorder which is thrown into its actions, is capable of producing images, imagining situations, and inventing consequences, without reason or truth. And, if so, it may surely be granted—at least it may be asked without presumption—that some other analogous but unknown action might be the result; and this unknown action may be the creation of spectral forms.

This opinion is confirmed by the phenomena of *nightmare*. This mighty enemy to peaceful repose generally depends upon the state of the brain, either primarily or secondarily. In the first place, it is most frequent, and most complete in cerebral affections; and especially in that peculiar condition of the brain which has arisen from intellectual over-action; in which a large quantity of blood has been determined to that viscus, and in which the balance of power, having been overturned by some occasional cause, the organ has become exhausted, and has been rendered irritable as a consequence of such excitement and exhaustion.

Moreover, the phenomena of *nightmare* are purely cerebral, and always disappear upon perfect waking: for the distress of the patient is occasioned by being placed in some imaginary situation of terror or danger, and by his incapa-

city to escape ; so that, in a severe paroxysm, he awakens, after a violent struggle, trembling, agitated, with palpitation of the heart, and in violent perspiration—all these symptoms pointing out the really intense agony which he has suffered from this visionary impression, produced by a physical condition of the organ of mind. They who have attended to this form of malady in themselves, will have observed, that the attack is very generally preceded by an unwonted drowsiness, showing that the brain is oppressed ; and, indeed, the occurrence of sleep, and the invasion of the symptoms of nightmare, often happen so very rapidly after going to bed, that the patient fancies it has occurred before he could possibly have fallen asleep ; as, in fact, it does before he would have been asleep under ordinary circumstances. But this never really happens ; the patient must be asleep, or he does not suffer from nightmare. This is another proof of the cerebral origin of this malady ; so that, if it be remotely depending upon the state of the stomach—and we believe that it frequently may be so—it is produced, not by the immediate agency of that viscus, but by its nervous and sympathetic connexion with the brain. And again, if from any cause the latter organ shall

have been powerfully excited late at night, that night will, in persons so predisposed, be almost certainly characterized by nightmare; so that, after a time, the patient may unerringly calculate upon the attack from his sensations before falling asleep.

Again: the *intensity* will be governed by the more or less morbid state of the cerebral organ; it will be severe when that morbid condition is considerable; it will increase with the deepening shades of brainular malady; and it will diminish exactly in proportion with the gradual return to healthy action, and with the progress of convalescence; till the attack shall have become slight, and the images with which it is associated ludicrously embarrassing, instead of being frightful; and till a perfect restoration of the organ also restores the patient to that healthy state in which the ugly hag no longer haunts his pillow.

Once more: the attack of nightmare is most common to individuals who possess an irritable brain. And, finally, the *illusions* which attend it are complete: the patient verily believes in their actual existence; and it is only by the influence of the judgment, reason, and experience, that he can be convinced of the contrary truth. Now, these illusions involve

the appearance of different individuals ; their speaking and acting, according to certain supposed circumstances ; and the consequences of such words and actions : all these being assuredly felt by the patient in no ordinary measure. I have been the more desirous of showing that this state is an affection of the brain, because of the natural inference, that in one particular state of that organ images are produced with all the character of reality about them—speaking, moving, thinking, and acting. This illusion is so complete, that their existence is never doubted for a moment ; and, therefore, there is nothing unreasonable in the supposition, that other morbid states of the same organ may give rise to varying, though analogous, phenomena.

We shall now proceed a step further, to the history and mystery of *dreams*.

Before, however, entering upon this subject more particularly, we must just notice the great *activity of the brain during sleep*.—It will be seen also that this is not the increased activity of the immaterial principle, when for the time dissociated from the entire agency of its cumbrous medium of manifestation ; because, if this were the case, we should have to mention only perfect ideas, refined images, and correct notices, as

resulting from such disencumbered action ; instead of the common result, imperfect ideas, confused images, and incorrect impressions.

Thus, again, at the outset of our inquiry we trace dreaming to a condition of the *material brain*, not of the *immaterial principle*: and it must be seen, that by so doing we *vindicate* the *honour* of God, and that we do *not derogate* from his *power*, or *wisdom*, or *goodness*. For if dreaming be produced by a peculiar condition of the organ of mind, that organ having been subjected to the perverting agency which accompanied man's lost and ruined state, the facts are accounted for ; this is a result of the natural punishment which attaches to sin, and is itself a proof of its debasing influence, while it forms a connecting link in the chain of the most perfect moral government of the world.

But if the strange, and fantastic, and heterogeneous groups of dreams do actually result from the uninfluenced associations of the immaterial spirit ; and if these do actually require to be corrected by the waking state — that is, by the influence of the brain (the organ appropriated for exhibiting the manifestations of mind) upon them—two consequences will result ; namely, That the immaterial spirit possesses very limited powers of intelligence ;

and, That these require to be aided by its *material connexions*;—results which are falsified by daily experience; and which, if allowed, would leave us at once in the darkness of the night of materialism.

The fact is, however, that the immaterial spirit is not *necessarily engaged* in the phenomena of dreaming: the *brain* is not its servant during sleep, because by that very state it is unfitted for intellectual operations; and when it does act, it is without the control of a presiding mind; and therefore the *morbid state of dreaming*, instead of the *physiological process of correct thinking*, is produced.

That the mode of association, and the habit of brainular action, are most rapid, may be proved by the phenomenon of dreaming, when we are awakened by a servant's customary knock in the morning. Sometimes this regularly-repeated sound will be received by the appropriate organ of sense, and will be transmitted to the brain; where it will produce, or at the least elicit, the customary automatic answer, without conveying any impression to the sentient principle; so that there shall remain no consciousness of having been called at all. At another time, when the sleep is less

perfect, the momentary knock at the door will excite in the brain an action connected with a long train of associated images : so that in the second of time which elapses between the impression of that sound, and the state of absolute wakening, a long dream will be passed through ; sometimes manifestly associated with this atmospherical vibration, and at others not so ; but uniformly marked by an inconceivable rapidity in the succession of images or impressions, which are dissipated as soon as perfect consciousness returns. Dreams, therefore, may be generally considered as resulting from some uncontrolled or morbid action of the brain ; and this action may be either primary, and attaching immediately to that organ ; or secondary and sympathetic, arising from the irritation of a distant organ in communion with the brain.

This position is confirmed by the dreams of animals. It will not be contended that their dreams result from spiritual agency ; yet we know that they do dream—as in the familiar instance of dogs—and that they will perform in consequence some of their peculiar functions, as barking, and various other automatic expressions of joy or sorrow. It is also known, that this disposition to disturbed sleep will be

promoted by any cause which has powerfully excited their brain; whether this may have been exercise or disease.

We may trace in these circumstances the rationale of our own dreams—namely, that they arise from the brain's spontaneous action, when under the influence of excitement or irritation, either from its own peculiar morbid state, or from that of some one of its associated organs.

We shall also probably find, that the great variety of dreams may be accounted for on the principle of the kind of disturbance to which the brain may be subjected from this primary or secondary irritation: and it is further manifest, that in the latter case the kind and degree of excitement may vary, not only according to the organ which forms the first source of irritation, but also according to the nature and extent of its morbid actions, and to their special affinities with the nervous system; thus forming a groundwork capable of constant change, and of almost infinite variety.

CHAPTER VIII.

The same subject continued.—Definition of dreams;—no dreams in natural sleep;—dreaming independent of the intellectual faculties;—proximate cause of dreaming;—exciting causes;—imperfect sleep;—irritation of the brain;—dreams of disease;—their endless variety, and organic classification.—Dreams of insanity.—Distinction of dreams arising from *primary* or *secondary* irritation of the brain;—recollected impressions;—accidental associations.

DREAMS may be defined to be trains of ideas and images confusedly heaped together during sleep, and resulting from irritation of the brain; that irritation admitting of many modifications, according to its peculiar condition—according to the endless variations of the general health—and according to the nature of any uneasiness, excess, or defect, in any one organ of the body, arising to such a height, or continuing so long, as to produce sympathetic disturbance of the nervous system.

It is to be remarked that there are no dreams in natural sleep—that is, in sound and quiet sleep—the body being healthy, and the mind at ease ; but if the brain shall have been irritated by deep mental emotion, intense or protracted study, the commencement of impending fever, or the existence of any morbid action in the system, then dreams will be produced ; will be generally traced to some disordered function ; and will often appear among the first phenomena of disease.

Now it is to be recollected, that in sleep the intellectual faculties are suspended, so far as regards the *manifestation* of their action ; and therefore they do not enter into the component phenomena of dreaming. For, however some dreams may appear to be almost rational and consecutive, it will be always found that they want at least *one link* to constitute them perfect mental operations ; there is a something wrong—a want of cohesion in the causes and consequences ; an absence of truth, which (however *vraisemblable* they may occasionally seem) destroys their title to credence, and stamps them with the character of deviation from correct thinking. Thus, there is no accurate perception of the bearing of associated circumstances ;

there is no attention to first principles ; there is no proper memory—for, however the reproduction of formerly associated images may seem to resemble memory, it will be found that it is always the automatic calling up of impressions which have been previously made upon the sensorial organ:—there is no intellectual association ; there is no judgment, which presupposes comparison, and a regular adjustment of the claims of imagination : in fine, there is no exercise of the will ; a proof of which is to be found in the great difficulty with which the patient arises from the uneasy slumber of nightmare.

However, therefore, the intellectual faculties may seem to be occasionally associated with dreams, it will always be found that this semblance of action is only the automatic production of the brain, from impressions which have been previously made upon it, as the *organ* of mental manifestation ; consequently, that the apparently intellectual trains are *merely organic associations*. And it is well that they are so : for, on the contrary supposition, we should have great reason to blush for them ; and there would be at least *one spot*, and that the *brightest in the universe*, where we should fail to trace the footsteps

of that Almighty Architect, who has *created all things in wisdom*.

It may be said, that these dreams are the result of sin, which, having entered into the world, pervades its remotest boundary, and more especially the heart of man, and all its thoughts and actions; and that dreams are sleeping thoughts characterized by this fatal influence. And this is true, but not in the sense of the objector. For, as it has been shown that the intellectual faculties are not *directly* implicated in dreaming, and as there is no exercise of the will, there can be no responsibility; consequently no infraction of the Divine law. But the organ of the mind has suffered, in common with the whole man, from the perverting influence of the fall; its manifestations have become disordered, and dreaming is one of its diseases. Hence, though man is not responsible for his *dreams*, he is awfully so for any course of conduct, any trains of thought, any indulgence of unhallowed passion, which may afford painful, though automatic associations, for an irritated brain to revive.

Still further: during sleep the *senses* are not capable of receiving their customary impressions, or of exerting their regular influence in controlling the wanderings of the intellectual

faculties ; but if sleep be disturbed, from any cause, then impressions made upon the senses will produce that irritation of their nerves which, when propagated to the brain, will form the basis of a dream, or of a succession of dreams ; in which may be produced, according to circumstances of varied irritation, and *not according to any principle of choice or selection*, a multitude of ideas, thoughts, opinions, habits, and associations, which have been acquired by individual intelligence, or which have been wrought out of knowledge so obtained by the agency of the spiritual principle, and which during such process exerted a certain influence upon the intellectual organ.

This influence may be re-excited by organic impressions, and may give the semblance of the immaterial mind being engaged in the pursuit. But it will be found that these trains may be called up to an extent, and with a degree of association, which it is impossible to restrain within defined limits : they are often incomplete ; they may be grotesquely grouped ; they may be true or false ; they may be utterly incoherent ; they *are* generally extravagant, and exceed all the ordinary bounds of credibility. If, then, these manifestations were referred to a continued action of the immaterial

spirit, independently of external impressions, it will follow that *the soul*, when *unassisted* by *these external material assistances*, *thought most incorrectly*—that is, that its actions were more pure and perfect now, when confined within its material tenement, than when disencumbered of mortality—which is an absurd result. But, on the contrary, when the process of dreaming is referred to a continued action of the brain, having, during sleep, escaped the control of the immaterial principle, all is harmony and beauty, and the Creator's laws stand vindicated from the charge of unreasonableness.

Again: the impression of uneasiness, received by the sensorial organ during the day, will often form the germ of a dream during the night; and many bodily uneasinesses will arise during that period, which will produce a similar effect: these impressions cannot be estimated, or compared, or referred to their true cause, because reason and judgment being suspended, erroneous perceptions are occasioned; and these may possibly produce consecutive trains of association. These associations are generally of the wildest character; and thus afford another proof that organic irritation, *not* mental operation, is the *proximate cause of dreaming*.

A great variety of circumstances will operate as *exciting* causes of dreaming: an uneasy position, and the automatic act of turning to relieve it; the sensation of cold, and the associated action of covering ourselves with bed-clothes; or of heat, with the consequent effort to dismiss all our coverings; the influence of habit—as in the act of instinctively answering to a knock at our door in the morning; passing through a long dream produced by this impression, and then continuing to sleep on, still pursuing during that sleep the associated trains which had been awakened by the first sensorial impressions, and had been then thrown together in the most dire and unextricable confusion.

Moreover, the influence of opium, or hyosciamus, belladonna, or aconite, or any other similar narcotic; much previous fatigue; continued mental emotion of whatever character; long-sustained study; general febrile indisposition; congestion of the brain; any point of *local irritation*, according to the intimacy of its union, or nearness of connexion with the brain; and many other causes, might be mentioned.

Yet it will be seen, that all these causes agree in one particular mode of action—namely, that of producing a peculiar excitement in

the cerebral organ, which forms the point of disturbance to the nervous system. And it will be further seen, that this peculiar disturbance is not always of one kind, nor the same in degree, but that it varies with circumstances; and that, therefore, differing results may be expected; not only as the brain may be stimulated many degrees more or less than the standard of health; but as such mode of stimulation may be possessed of a particular character, which will communicate its tinge to the consequent images.

In approaching and imperfect sleep, when any one of these irritants exists, it is very usual for unreal images to present themselves to notice: figures exhibiting the most grotesque and even horrible grimaces; and forms the most undefined, or possessing the nearest possible resemblance to some living person, or to those long since gone; as well as fugitive configurations of different associated objects, arise, fade, and pass away; leaving behind them, on some favourably constituted brains, an impression so vivid, that it bears the semblance of truth, and the mind cannot be persuaded to the contrary; nay, so strong is this belief, that any effort to undermine its foundation would produce a recoil in favour of what is most

assuredly believed to be true. Thus, then, it will be seen, that any impression made upon the sensorial organ, which is insufficient to interrupt the process of sleep, may occasion dreaming.

This state is further elucidated by the condition of the mildly *insane*. A little consideration will show that the *perfect integrity* of the brain is necessary to the manifestation of thought; so, consequently, wherever there exists any alteration of brainular function, the slightest increased disorder will produce amazing changes in the intelligence of such a patient; who, while he preserves the exercise of his senses, and even of some of his intellectual faculties, will nevertheless reason most incorrectly upon *all*, or upon *some*, or only *one* subject, and will associate the most monstrous and incoherent images. Here, then, is a proof of the influence exerted over the mental manifestations by slight irritation of the organ; much more is this influence exerted during sleep.

But, again, a very frequent cause of dreaming is a more extensive irritation of the brain, experienced by this organ, either primarily, during the approach or development of its own diseases; or consecutively, on the invasion of

disorder of other organs with which it is associated, and even varied according to the particular relation of these organs and their functions: so that dreams will derive their character from whatever disturbance may happen to form the first link in the chain of morbid sympathy or association, or from whatever organ may, from its *peculiar* feebleness, become the prominent object of attention in the progress of malady.

Further: the dreams of disease will also present a great variety, according to the nature, the duration, the period, the simplicity, or the complication of the morbid action which produces them; and according to the physical temperament, habits, and idiosyncracies of the individual. In this short sentence will be found a sufficient explanation of the endless varieties of dreaming. It has been supposed that dreams may possess a peculiar character, from the existence of simple febrile action; but it is more philosophical, as well as more consonant with truth, to believe that fever always has a local origin, and that the peculiarities of febrile dreams are to be sought for in the particular organ which forms the cause of constitutional irritation.

But the division adopted in this Essay, of

dreams arising from a greater or less degree of morbid disposition on the part of the brain itself, or of its consecutive irritation from the suffering of some other organ of the body, is sufficient for the present purpose. The time will probably arrive, when it will be possible to classify dreams, and when, from being referred to their organic cause, they will become *symptoms* which will greatly assist the diagnosis of disease: but at present this is impossible; our knowledge is too limited, our observations too few, to warrant any thing like generalization. This, however, we do know, that there are some forms of organic irritation so slight, that during our waking hours, and from attention to other things, they are not noticed; yet they are sufficient to disturb sleep, and to occasion dreaming. Often, indeed, in the early stage of malady, will this form the exclusive indication of disease; and the intensity and aggravation of dreams will mark the progress of such a disturbed state, while their gradually increasing mildness will equally proclaim the return of convalescence.

Again: the relation subsisting between dreams and their organic cause, will show that certain apparent illusions, which occur during the act of dreaming, were *really true* in their

germ, although they may have ultimately become the exaggerated or sophisticated expression of a real sensation.

Dreams will be sometimes characterized by the state of the brain during the incubation of disease, and before it has actually made its manifest attack—as in apoplexy, epilepsy, nervous fever, typhus, &c. I have lately had an opportunity of witnessing, and of watching very narrowly, the dreams of the latter state, and the complete and perfect illusions to which they give rise, as well as the firmness of belief with which they are connected; as perfect, certainly, as that of any superstitious individual, whose path has been crossed, or whose pillow has been haunted by some supernatural appearance.

We must not omit to mention in this place the dreams of insanity, which are sometimes most extraordinary. Moreover, the peculiar state of the brain, producing this morbid condition of its manifestations, may be suspended during the day, and may be again renewed at night, so soon as the organ of the mind has lost the opportunity of verifying its impressions through the medium of the senses. This state of insanity may be transient; it may be only momentary; and yet its delusion at that moment may

be so complete as to lead the patient to commit the greatest crimes (if criminality could attach to insanity), not only without remorse, but even glorying in the illusion which has led perhaps to a fatal catastrophe.

There is a manifest difference between dreams which arise either from primary or secondary irritation of the brain : and even in the former case, between those which are the consequence of irritation arising from venous congestion, or from an increased supply of arterial blood. In the case of secondary irritation, it is probable that a modification of brainular action will occur (we might have said, it actually does happen) in exact correspondence with that of the organ which forms the primary source of irritation, and with its peculiar mode of morbid action ; so that the process of dreaming will be characterized by this extensive variety of nervous impression—an impression still further modified by the peculiarities of its messengers ; that is, of the nerves which convey these notices to the brain.

When primary irritation of this viscus is the cause of this diseased manifestation, if there be too great arterial action, sleep will be light, easily disturbed, and approaching more nearly to

the waking state ; the patient is highly nervous ; in a most sensitive and susceptible state ; every impression is felt with an undue impulse ; and hurried action, increased intensity of feeling, great rapidity in the succession of ideas and emotions, the sanguine vivacity of hope and cheerful expectation, and the great ease with which every difficulty is surmounted, will form the essential character of the dreams : because the brain is unduly excited ; it receives a larger supply of its natural stimulus than it ought to do, or than it knows how to dispose of : and then, when sleep invades the patient, his brain is set at liberty from physical and moral restraint ; and it operates largely, without effort or design, but chiefly through ideas and impressions already associated, and yet connected in a manner so extraordinary, that we cannot even trace their cohesion or affinity.

In the opposite state, where congestion forms the chief symptom of brainular malady, sleep is profound, even heavy and oppressed. In this condition dreaming may occur, without producing a consciousness of such action ; or, if the congested state be only slight, and the profoundness of sleep not unnatural, the associated images will have the semblance of great truth about them. There will be a character of

reality attaching to dreams under these circumstances, which may leave an impression upon the waking hours not easily dissipated ; and the associated impressions and emotions will obtain an equal freedom and extent of operation, and yet will seem to possess a greater degree of cohesion, or, at least, will exhibit a family resemblance.

These states may vary in a very short period, from change of posture, and various other circumstances ; they may distinctly alternate ; or they may run into each other, so as to lose their defined outline : and these changes may happen during the course of *one* dream ; an event which, connected with the different degrees of profundity of sleep, will go far to account for the greater or less obvious attribute of rationality which occasionally seems to attend upon one dream ; and also for the frequent interruption of the first action of a dream by another associated impression, which interferes with the harmony of the former action, and brings disorder and confusion into the whole process. Let it be remembered, that truth does occasionally attend these perceptions ; but this is not often to be expected, and ought never to be calculated for, much less to be relied upon.

Further : it must be evident how much the

morbid state of brainular action, which may be considered as accidental, must be influenced by the original conformation of the brain, and by various circumstances, both physical and moral, which have contributed to develop or to retard its manifestations; by habitual susceptibility to impression; by the amount of its literary labours; by the degree and kind of intelligence for which the individual is remarkable; by the effects of the light and shade of his intellectual and moral acquisitions; by the period of life, and situation in society; by the sex, and the associated plans of suitable intellectual and literary pursuit; by the frivolities of fashion and folly, or the varied plans of usefulness; by the prominent modes of thought, and action, and passion; by the influence of physical temperament; by the kind of life which has been previously led, or which is now resolved to be led; and by a host of apparently accidental circumstances in the manner of living, and thinking, and expression.

Now it will be seen that all these circumstances operate a certain effect upon the organ through which the mental manifestations occur; and it is this effect which afterwards communicates its character to the dreaming state. And again, the slightest deviation from health

may so modify the disposition of the cerebral organ, as to change its mental manifestations ; and this real or apparent difference will be followed by a corresponding real or apparent difference in the intellectual aptitudes and moral feeling of the individual ; and this again may disturb the sleep, occasion dreaming, and characterize its images.

This effect of indisposition upon the mental manifestations we often experience when awake ; and inaptitude for intellectual exertion, a want of interest in spiritual objects and pursuits, and irritability of temper, form portions of that trial which awaits us here below, and exercises our industry, our dependance upon Almighty aid, our faith and hope and confidence, our struggling against that which is evil, and our determination, in the strength of the Lord our God, to be victorious over that imperfection and frailty which cling to our fallen nature, and which we are constantly called upon to oppose with effort, with watchfulness, with prayer, with the shield of faith, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. But during sleep we are unable to oppose the influence of body upon mind, because the *combination of ideas* is involuntary, and *becomes, in its turn*, a stimulus to the brain to enter into new associa-

tions, and to give a great variety of character to the dreams.

Dreams which are depending for their *origin* upon these states, will probably be characterized by moral or intellectual agency, unless the brain shall have been so far disturbed by its early impressions as to lose the distinctive character of the first, in the subsequently associated organic actions ; and this will depend very much upon the state of the bodily system at the time. In all these instances, however, we find, that, in order to the production of dreaming, brainular action must be dissociated from the will ; and then, being submitted to its own agency, or to the impulse it has received from organic causes, these phenomena occur.

One other source of dreaming will be found in the recollected impressions of the preceding day, or of some antecedent period. It will often happen, that the dream may be traced to some thought or action which has occupied the attention during the day, and which will be reproduced at night in dreams, grotesquely associated with other persons and things ; and, if the sleep be light, with an air of *vraisemblance* which makes the patient really doubt if it be a dream or a truth. The last impression of the evening will often be revived and carried on ;

and at other times a long-lost emotion will be recalled by an action which we cannot comprehend, but which depends upon some law of nature, by which impressions once made upon the brain may ever afterwards be revived by its own agency, spontaneously, and without any kind of effort. Yet here, again, brainular impression must precede.

Lastly; *accidental association* will characterize the dreams: such, for instance, are dreams of hunger and thirst. “It shall be even as when a hungry man dreameth, and, behold, he eateth; but he awaketh, and his soul is empty: or as when a thirsty man dreameth, and, behold, he drinketh; but he awaketh, and, behold, he is faint, and his soul hath appetite.”

CHAPTER IX.

The same subject continued.—Somnambulism.—Second sight.—Animal magnetism.—Influence of imagination, and of superstitious credence.—Is there *any* truth in popular superstitions?

IN continuing the history of dreams, and other analogous brainular manifestations, we may not omit some notice of the phenomena of somnambulism.

The common form of somnambulism, must be considered as a kind of dream, happening during profound sleep, in which some actions, intimately associated in the waking state, and rendered easy, and almost automatic, by long continued habit, are reproduced in sleep without *apparent* volition; and these actions correspond with the ideas, feelings, and emotions, the succession and combination of which, form the intellectual and mental fabric of the dream.

Possibly the alleged faculty of *second sight*, so far as it is not a mere jugglery of the designing, may be referred to a species of somnambulism, in which the mental manifestations confer with themselves, and produce a prospective result, which has been termed *second sight*. If this mental manifestation be not referred to a *cerebral* origin, there is no alternative but that of either denying its existence altogether, or investing it with the attributes of prophecy, and admitting it as the result of inspiration;—this inspiration being either a spiritual communication from the most high God, or a suggestion of the evil one. All these alternatives are unsatisfactory. To deny its existence altogether, seems impossible; to place it on a level with Revelation, derogates from the high and holy character of prophecy; and to ascribe it to Satanic agency, is to allow Satan a greater sway over the government of the universe than is consistent with our views of the power, and knowledge, and goodness, of the omnipotent Jehovah.

But if we consider it as an affair of the brain, occurring principally in advanced life, and when that organ is manifestly suffering under excited action; and, what is very important to be remembered, both the seer and his auditors

fully believing from their infancy the occurrence of such manifestations, and prepared implicitly to receive them ; we are enabled to class it at once with other phenomena which result from analogous stages of excitement, when the brain has escaped from the influence of the will and the judgment, and continues its morbid function without guidance or direction.

The common examples of cunning men and women, the practice of fortune-telling, and the science of astrology and divination, must be referred to the class of impostures ; and, as such, are scarcely entitled to consideration among the legitimate offspring of superstition. And yet their influence upon many minds is extensive, and even frightful : and the best antidote is to be found in the principle of quiet confidence in that superintending Providence, without whose knowledge not even a sparrow falls to the ground, by whom even the hairs of our head are all numbered, and in whose hands are the hearts of *all men*. True, there is much evil in the world, much apparent wrong, much injustice, oppression, and misery, which, to short-sighted mortality, appear inconsistent with this universal prevalence of goodness and justice. But shall man be more just than his Maker ? God is not the author of any evil :

man is a free agent, and, as such, in following the dictates of his corrupt nature, is often permitted (not *employed*) to bring about the wise and good designs of the Almighty ; but these attributes of wisdom and goodness are not determined, by what isolated and purblind mortality can see, but by that omniscient eye which takes in creation at a glance, and embraces eternity in the view of an instant.

To return : There are on record some extraordinary relations of the endless wonders of somnambulism : during which state have occurred certain mental actions, which it is difficult to disbelieve, and not easy to account for, unless by referring them to a peculiar excitement of the brain, under the influence of some powerful intellectual stimulus ; or to a morbid agency, under the impression of its own diseases ; or to the sympathetic disturbance of some other suffering organ.

There are many different degrees of somnambulism : as, for instance, the case of those who simply talk in their sleep ; of those who move and walk, but do not talk ; of those who both walk and talk ; and of those who speak, move, and likewise experience some sensations, and even recollected impressions, of various kinds ; who are also sensible to alternations of

temperature, and to other circumstances connected with their general state.

Now these several conditions possess a well-defined analogy with instinctive action: the operations of the somnambulist are performed without the concurrence of the will, and by the sole influence of their association with a certain train of ideas and images, to which, by long habit, they have been inseparably connected. But *habit* is a *cerebral impression*, and therefore a peculiar state of the brain will account for these phenomena.

The only known fact which would *seem* to militate against this conclusion, is the history of a German student, who rose in the night, during profound sleep, seated himself at his desk, began composing, and, having written a word which he did not approve, blotted it out, and substituted another which was more appropriate. Now if this narration be true, and it appears to rest on a sufficiently authentic foundation, it must be confessed to be one of the most extraordinary instances of somnambulism, and to involve the semblance of an exercise of the judgment, and of the will, grounded upon its decision. But when it is recollected, that, according to the history, the eye was during all this time perfectly *closed*, it is clear that one

essential part of the process is wanting : it is impossible that the writer could have seen the term so altered, and therefore there could not have been an exercise of the *perfect will* ; while, on the contrary, long familiarity with the subject on which he was engaged in writing, and on which, probably, his last waking thoughts had been employed ; and the automatic continuance of the same brainular action, after the influence of the will had been suspended by sleep, will still bring us to that physical influence of *habit*, to which we have just before referred the more common actions of somnambulism. I may add two instances which have occurred within my own observation ; in the former of which, an individual arose from his bed, and hunted over a large box of papers, apparently in quest of a particular document, but, not finding it, replaced the other deeds, and returned to bed : and of another, who, having forgotten his usual duty of winding up the clock on Saturday night, rose from his bed during sleep, went down stairs, performed the customary duty, and returned. Habit alone and habitual association can account for these circumstances.

But we must notice a little, in this place, the phenomena of *animal magnetism* ; a state

nearly allied to somnambulism, and very important in the present inquiry. No question, perhaps, of late years, has been met with more positive and obstinate opposition on the one hand, or with a greater degree of enthusiastic admiration on the other; unanimously rejected by the former, and revived with as full a belief in all its consequences by the latter. Yet it would seem impossible to deny the facts which are alleged, and equally impossible to account for them, except by granting them a *physical origin*.

But the *effects produced are similar to those for which a spiritual and supernatural agency has been asked*; and if it be granted in the one instance, it cannot be withheld in the other. In the phenomena of animal magnetism, as they are capable of being produced by the concurrence of the magnetizer and magnetized, there happens an opportunity of witnessing the operation; and since this can be referred entirely to physical circumstances, there is nothing unreasonable in claiming a similar organ for other analogous phenomena.

It is then to be remarked, that the magnetic paroxysm is most easily produced upon a brain which is in an irritable and excited state; that the *concurrence* of the two individuals (the

agent and recipient of magnetic influence) in the same object, and the full determination of their will towards its accomplishment, appear to be necessary to success; and, moreover, that, for the most part, certain actions of the hands seem to be necessary, or at least useful in making a deep impression upon the nervous system. Besides, the phenomena which precede the magnetic orgasm are all indicative of a highly excited and disturbed action of the brain; and it is only after the continuance and increase of these symptoms for some time, that the fully-formed magnetic somnambulism is produced.

It may not be easy to find a method of explaining all the phenomena of this state; but admitting their existence, it is manifest that they are *purely physical, resulting from the operation of brain upon brain*, when placed within the sphere of a certain relation to each other: phenomena, for example, somewhat analogous to the development of electricity by the friction of a stick of sealing wax; or of the galvanic aura, by the union of two metallic bodies under given circumstances. The precise mode of explaining this state is not at all necessary to my purpose: it is sufficient, if the phenomena may be fairly traced to a purely cerebral origin; to

a *physical, not a spiritual agency*: and if the result be such a disorder in the mental manifestations as shall terminate in the creation of unreal forms and images, and in the exhibition of unwonted power on the part of some of the intellectual faculties.

It is not pretended that a powerful impression upon the mind will not greatly aid the effect; because this latter agent produces that physical susceptibility of the brain, which we have supposed to be almost a necessary condition of successful magnetic operation; but which cannot be obtained, *without the intervention of the material organ*. Only let it be remembered, that during this state, there appears, on the part of the magnetized, an alleged power of predicting certain events; a certain impression of futurity, *very analogous* to the *presentiments* of our neighbours—the “coming events” which “cast their shadows before,” of the Highland seer; so that probably both states may depend upon some similar condition of the brainular system.

We may not altogether omit some *specific* notice of the influence of imagination, in occasioning a state of the brain favourable for the production of such mental manifestations. Its agency has been already pointed out in the

hypocondriac ; and it is no less cognizable in the hysterical state, as well as in other disorders of the function of the brain. In this latter case, the patient is abstracted from the influence of reason and judgment ; his fancy becomes omnipotent, and the deepening gloom of melancholy is very commonly thrown over all the prospects of futurity, attended by all the undefined creations of fear.

Not many months since, I visited a patient of this class. I found her one day in a state of unusual agitation, and I inquired the cause : she told me, that as she had been sitting in her chair, she had seen a snake coiled under her feet : she had screamed aloud upon this discovery, and the agitation which I witnessed was the result ; for although, as it is perhaps needless to say, her attendants were unable to discover the alleged intruder, yet the impression made upon her nervous system was so great, that she had been unable to recover herself from a shock, produced not only without any real object of fear, but simply through the medium of imagination, which conjured up this creation, at a period of the year too when snakes are not seen. But if disorders of the bodily health will produce such a morbid action of the brain, as that it should assuredly,

and upon the fullest conviction, discover a snake where none existed, it surely is not too much to require, that a similar physical influence may give rise to other unreal and supernatural appearances; and may produce that state of brain in which it will see its own creations, and believe them to be real existences; that state, in fact, which shall develop the belief in apparitions.

This article of popular creed (the belief in spectres and ghosts), and its consequences,—imaginary terror and superstitious agitation before going to bed,—are of themselves a frequent cause of *dreaming*; for the susceptibility of the brain to continue its evening action during the night, and to take up its last waking impression, and to revive it with adventitious and fantastic circumstances of its own grouping, has been already demonstrated: added to which, an irritable state of that organ has been oftentimes induced by the excitement of listening to tales of this kind,—an excitement, too, of rather an intense character, and accompanied, in proportion to its intensity and continuance, by that exhaustion which leaves behind it a constantly decreasing power of supporting what is in fact a “fever of the spirits,” and there-

fore a greater susceptibility to morbid action of every kind.

Again :—another of its laws, that of habit, would be brought to bear powerfully upon this point ; and by its influence, the brain would be more liable to fall into analogous strains of thought and feeling : and, moreover, this very excitement and expenditure of energy, does actually give rise to that commencement of morbid action which constitutes the precise state of peculiar adaptation to erroneous and spectral impression, the existence of which has been already assumed.

If any person question such a state of the cerebral organ, only let him attend to a simple physiological fact : let him commit to memory imperfectly, a certain piece of poetry or prose in the evening of to-day, and in the morning of to-morrow its recollected impression will be far more perfect than its first conception the night before ; and this, not because the energy of the brain has been accumulated, and its capacity for acquisition augmented by rest, and that its faculties are freshened and invigorated : it is an effect which precedes the exertion of those faculties, and may be observed as the first waking act, and is accomplished without

effort; doubtless because the organ of mind has been subjected to its organic physiological laws of continued though involuntary action during sleep; of accumulated sensibility, because this property is not strained off by the outlet of the waking senses; and of extended habit, when freed from the shackles of social perversion.

There is a species of dream, which consists in alleged visions during trances or prolonged slumbers; but surely none can doubt the physical origin of this form of cerebral hallucination. It is a state very nearly allied to the highest degree of somnambulism; and, where it has not been the offspring of imposture, or self-delusion, it has arisen from a peculiar morbid action of the brainular organ.

It has been sometimes thought that an altered condition of the circulating fluids might account for these phenomena; but the explanation is unnecessary, and unsatisfactory: and surely, if we observe a disturbed manifestation of mind, we ought to refer it to the manifesting organ. Besides, the individuals who have been the subjects of these visions, have been persons of highly nervous temperament; in whom susceptibility to impression predominated,—ge-

nerally females, and such too as were predisposed to hysterical affections.

Another important circumstance to be remarked in this place, is that these visions have generally been characterized by the predominance of the particular temperament of each individual; that is, by the prevalence of the essential attributes of his cerebral or nervous system; and have assumed a sanguine or a melancholic character accordingly.

This effect is also frequently to be referred to momentary insanity, and to the delusion by which it is accompanied. So powerful is the latter, that it remains even after the patient has been restored to a sound employment of the intellectual organ; and he relates in simple and sober earnestness, what he thinks he has said, or seen, or done, during such temporary disorder of the function of the brain, and most firmly believes in its truth; a sufficient proof, were there no other, that a morbid condition of the brain may give rise to unreal images, and that their influence upon the manifestations of mind may be very extensive.

In the present state of our knowledge, we are not prepared to say wherein consists the peculiar irritation of the brain which occa-

sions this state : it is one of the many truths of which we cannot as yet fathom the rationale. In fact, we are not at all acquainted with the *nature* of the function of the brain ; that is, we know not *how* it is performed ; and therefore we cannot presume to be well informed of its deviations from healthful agency ; we can only trace its effects, and reason back from these to their cause.

Poor human nature ! what a lesson of humility is inculcated by the simple fact of its ignorance, even of the first principles which govern, or at least greatly influence its own actions ! What infinite wisdom and goodness are displayed in the creation and preservation of such a wonderful structure as the brain ! How are the malignity of sin, and the depth of our fall from original perfection, shown by the limited powers and frequent morbid actions of that viscus ! And what infinite condescension and grace are exhibited in the fact, that for this poor, sinful, ignorant, and wandering creature, man, Christ died, and, having become his ransom, has promised, if he will accept the offers of his grace, to restore him to the image of God, and to the full exercise of every power and faculty, in realms of unfading joy.

To return from these digressive remarks, it is

a fact, that, however ignorant we may be of the nature of the brain's function, we know it as extensively as we do that of any other function of the body ; as, for instance, the process of secretion, of which, we only understand that it takes place under the influence of the brain, and that it is suspended when that influence is withdrawn : but in what that influence consists, how it is communicated, and in what way it excites the particular organ to its function, we know not. Yet we are aware that the integrity of this secretion is affected by every morbid cause, disturbing the quiet calm of the secreting organ, and that it is more or less vitiated by every such disturbance. *But if the simpler actions of the brain, in ministering to the process of secretion, be interrupted by organic irritation ; may not its more complex office, of manifesting the powers and attainments of the mind, be likewise subjected to similar laws ?*

Before we proceed farther, we might ask, Is there ANY *truth* in popular superstitions ; or do they all rest on the basis of an enthusiastic belief in the actual existence of spectral illusions, which can only be accounted for satisfactorily by attributing to them a cerebral and bodily origin ? It is urged, that these all rest on the same foundation ; namely, *human testi-*

mony; and that he who ventures to doubt their positive being, is met by a host of *overwhelming facts*, in answer to his scepticism,—these facts forming the evidence of so many persons of assumed health of body, and integrity of brain-ular manifestation. That we venture to doubt this evidence, and to disbelieve this sanity of body and mind, may be perhaps our misfortune; but it is our honest conviction, and, as such, we are bound to maintain what we believe to be the truth.

If then, all these histories rest on the same basis, and if it can be proved that *any one* of them is false and absurd, it will form a very strong presumption in favour of other similar relations being equally false and absurd. Take, for example, the history of the fairies; a little, busy people, whose good and evil offices are as well authenticated by substantial testimony as any similar stories. But where is there now to be found an individual who believes in their existence? Doubt is thrown upon the evidence in their favour: the value of human testimony is shaken; and as it is not to be supposed that these histories have been entirely fabricated by the designing, it will follow that the parties have been self-deceived; and, if so, what is so likely to have occasioned such de-

lusion as a *peculiar state of irritation of the brain, giving rise to spectral appearances?* But we have supposed this cause to exist, with regard to other supernatural apparitions; and the supposition is strengthened by referring to the acknowledged absurdity of one form of popular superstition.

It may be objected that the evidence in favour of dreams and other manifestations is derived from the same source as that on which rests our belief in the truths of our holy religion. Now, that the Almighty Governor of the universe can employ, or overrule, if he so will, for the wisest purposes, any action of the system, natural or supernatural, to accomplish his merciful intentions, is most fully and explicitly admitted; and the evidence in proof that He has done so, rests on the most unquestioned foundation; but then a particular purpose was to be accomplished; a part of the great designs of love and mercy to fallen, sinful, helpless man.

The answer to the objection is this: Direct communications from on high appear to have been limited to certain portions of the history of the church; and the testimony of the Sacred Scriptures in favour of *dreams*, as containing a revelation of the will of God, may be equally

alleged in support of miracles, and prophecies, and special commissions from on high—nay more, of the gifts of tongues, and of inspiration itself. These several modes of spiritual intercourse with the Almighty were formerly vouchsafed; but now we have the written word of God for our guide, containing all things necessary to salvation. The canon of Revelation is so complete, that a woe is denounced against those who would add to it; miracles are no longer necessary to prove the divine power and authority of Christ; the voice of prophecy, the extraordinary communication of language, and the gift of inspiration, have given way to the ordinary operations of Divine grace; to the teaching of the Spirit, and faith, and prayer, and obedience, and communion with God in his ordinances, and in waiting upon him in humble desire to be led and guided into all truth.

In the same class of extraordinary communication, dreams and visions are to be ranged, which have equally ceased with the peculiarities of the ages to which we have referred. These are not to form the rule for our opinions at the present day; miraculous interposition is no longer to be expected: the spirit of prophecy no longer actuates the ministers of God;

it has fled with the necessity for its employment. We have no longer any gifted Apostles with supernatural powers, in order to establish the divinity of their commission: the evangelists of the present day are those only who expound the word of God to perishing sinners; and although the Bible and Missionary Societies, by their exertions, have almost imitated—not to speak it profanely—the gift of tongues; yet we do not expect that their translators will proceed in their work, under the unerring influence of the gift of the Spirit, without the labour of previous study, and careful translation, collation, and revision, again and again. We no longer expect these circumstances, which were for a given purpose, to proclaim the infinite power and essential Divinity of the incarnate Saviour, and to effect the miraculous extension of his kingdom. These have ceased with the apostolic age.

Now in the same class of agents which the Supreme has deigned to employ, are dreams; but we should no more expect that the Almighty would *now* employ the latter than the former. And since no one would at this day receive the commission of an Apostle; but since every one would treat the assumption of such power with discredit, and would throw

the odium of imposture or insanity upon those who assumed to be sent on an especial message from God to his creatures, and who pretended to miraculous powers in support of their message; so no one at this period of the Christian day ought to appeal to dreams, as evidence of a communication from the Almighty Disposer of all things.

CHAPTER X.

The same subject continued.—Dreams commissioned for the discovery of crime ;—application of the author's principles to the history of W. Corder ;—agency of the Devil in the production of dreams and various errors :—vision of angels, &c. &c.

THERE are some particular forms of dreaming, which should be just noticed in this place : and, first, that which we are often told has been commissioned for the *discovery* of crime. In these cases it is assumed, that crime—for the most part murder—has been for a time successfully concealed ; but that detection haunts the footsteps of the criminal : and that an impression of circumstances is revealed to some individual during sleep, which leads to the disclosure of such a chain of evidence as may terminate in the conviction of the murderer. This train of reasoning proceeds upon the assumption, that God is a righteous Governor, and

will not suffer a murderer to live; but that “whosoever sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall” actually, as well as injunctively, “his blood be shed.”

Now if it were true that the present is the final state of retribution, there would be good ground for this reasoning. But it is to be recollected, that God is merciful as well as just; and that, though he is angry with the wicked every day, he defers his wrath, and delights to be long-suffering, and to extend the day of grace, the hour of returning to him to seek the pardon of sin: and when we reflect, that if God were strict to mark iniquity,—that is, if *justice* were his only attribute,—the infliction of punishment would follow the commission of sin, and that we could have no hope of acceptance with him, we see that this pursuit of the criminal is not a necessary consequence of this attribute: on the contrary, that in his dealings with his sinful creatures, he willeth not their death, but rather that they should turn unto him and live.

Further, *this* is not the day of retribution, but of proffered pardon, if it will be accepted in Christ Jesus. Here on earth, we daily see crime successful, and virtue suffering; the one caressed, the other in poverty, obscurity, and

neglect; the one surrounded by friends and affluence, the other in indigence and destitution; the latter constantly suffering injustice from the oppression of the former. This is not the *coming* period, when the righteous shall be for ever blessed, and the wicked shall be for ever miserable. There is *now* an inequality in their lot, which will only be rendered right at the last great day of account; so that here again it is shown not to be inconsistent with the dealings of the providence of God, that the wicked should escape punishment in the present life.

Moreover, this assumption proceeds upon an idea of the justice of the Almighty requiring the punishment by the hand of man, of certain very great offences. But then it has happened, and that not unfrequently, that the innocent have suffered; that is, that they have been innocent of the particular crime for which they were executed: and this is another proof that errors are permitted here, and that we must cast our eye forward to hereafter, for the full display of the retributive justice of God. In fact, the circumstances of the innocent having suffered in the place of the guilty, while the latter have escaped, would, on any other supposition, impugn the attribute of justice in

Him who is perfect holiness. It is, therefore, unnecessary on account of his justice : and, indeed, if it were necessary, it would *always* be discovered ; a supposition which we know to be contradicted by facts.

But if this result be neither necessary nor constant, we may well question the validity of any pretended deviation from the ordinary course of God's providence, in order to its being obtained. And may not this dreaming almost always, if not always, be accounted for on other principles less liable to objection ?

We will exemplify the principle by applying it to one recent instance ; namely, the discovery of the murder of Maria Marten by William Corder : and this example is chosen only because it is of late occurrence, and that the principal facts still live in the memory of the public. It does not, indeed, appear, by the published evidence on the trial, that this discovery and conviction did actually take place in consequence of a dream of her mother, Ann Marten ; but it was so stated by her at the coroner's inquest, and it is the popular opinion, and is therefore a proper subject for consideration.

Now let it be remembered, that the *Red Barn* was the place in which her daughter was last seen in company with William Corder ;—

let the long and anxious interval since she had heard from her be duly estimated; let the equivocal and evasive answers of Corder to her own, and the neighbours' inquiries, be taken into adequate consideration; let the continued irritation of the brain, which arose from the circumstances of suspense, misgiving, and anxiety, and which had necessarily brought that brain into a state of morbid susceptibility, that is, into the condition which has been alleged as the proximate cause of dreaming, receive its due weight;—above all, let the avowed observations of Corder to Phœbe Stow, that although Maria Marten was a young woman, “she was not likely to be troubled with any more children;” and further, that *he* knew “when he was not with her, *nobody else was,*” be added to the preceding impressions;—let all these facts be duly estimated, and then let any reasonable mind say whether there be not sufficient natural and physical ground for the alleged supernatural interposition, through the medium of a dream; in the anxious direction of the waking thoughts, in the irritated brain which was the consequence of this anxiety, and in the scattered facts just detailed,—which, if embodied by that organ, when acting on without the government of the will, and clothed with its own involuntary imagery,

would easily invest obscurity with an impression of murder, and would localize that deed to the spot in which the absent individual was last seen with William Corder. There is surely no necessary ground for supernatural agency in such a history ; all is clearly and satisfactorily accounted for on rational principles. Even allowing that the vengeance of the Almighty was thus pursuing the murderer, and suffering him not to live, the honour of God and the ways of his Providence are more completely vindicated, when we see them brought about by the agency of natural causes, than by supposing a special interference with the established order of nature ; since, if we may admit the idea of comparison, as applied to an Infinite Being, *that* appears to be a greater exertion of power and wisdom, which orders all the manifold events and circumstances of life, health, and disease, so as to bring about certain designs, than when these designs are accomplished by one supernatural visitation.

Others attribute, much too vaguely, the suggestion of evil thoughts, the prompting to sinful conduct, and even the production of dreams, to the evil spirit. Now it is fully allowed, that, by the transgression of man, sin entered into the world, and death by sin ; and sin

reigns in our mortal bodies. By this fall of man, he has become corrupt; prone to ill; averse from good; delighting in that which is contrary to the law of God, and in rebellion against him. But Satanic influence is often alleged as a kind of excuse for sin. Man thinks himself half excused from his transgression, when he says that he was tempted to sin; and really fancies that this temptation could not be resisted, except with extraordinary difficulty, *because* it arose from a very powerful adversary.

St. Paul says, that “when he would do good, evil was present with him;” and St. James most satisfactorily states, that “every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lusts, and enticed” by them into obliquities of conduct. And this is the simple fact. Sin is the evil principle embodied in action. By the fall of our first parent, the manifestation of every faculty of the soul has become debased; man easily falls into error; courts the deepening shades of vice, and even loves them; but very difficultly regains the steep ascent to God and heaven, from which there is a constant recoil in his rebellious heart. Now, till that heart has been renewed by Divine grace, there is a constant propensity to evil; and after-

wards there is, or ought to be, a never-failing opposition to that corrupt tendency, which man inherits from his first parent. And it is only by the restraining and preventing grace of God, that any are enabled to stand against such an overwhelming tyranny; overwhelming, because the heart loves it, and eagerly clasps the chain by which it is held. Since, then, it is only by a new and living principle, even the grace of God which bringeth salvation, that the Christian escapes the corruption of sin, which is in the world; so, in the absence of this living principle, man becomes the slave of his sinful propensities: he is a tempter to himself, and he falls into gross vice from listening to the voice of his corruptions. Yet God has furnished him with a counteracting principle, if he will sincerely ask for it; and has promised to bestow it liberally.

Now it will not be contended that Satanic influence is superior to this sacred holy agency; it is only that man is too proud to ask for this boon, too corrupt to esteem it, too wicked to receive it; he delights in iniquity, and in the gratification of his passions: to their depraved influence he listens with pleasure, and when conscience reminds him of his deviations from rectitude, he rejoices to lay the blame upon the

temptation of Satan ; as if Satan would be permitted to exert any power over him, except through the medium of his unrenewed nature ; his disposition to sin ; his corrupt propensities ; and his delight to serve sin, rather than be found obedient to the Saviour, and living a life of righteousness, by faith upon Him who is the Son of God.

But what are we to say on the subject of errors in opinion and judgment ? Man, simple man, is the slave of Satan, because, since the fall, he thinks incorrectly, reasons erroneously, determines hastily, judges unfairly : both soul and body are subject to this debasing influence ; and therefore the spiritual principle has lost its power, and its attributes have been perverted, while the power of manifesting these operations has been curtailed, by the feebleness and morbid tendency of the organ destined for such visible manifestation. In both ways, error is produced ; and the operations of Satan upon the mind are made through the medium of this perversion of its functions, which, being applied to the affairs of life, leads to error in opinion, and obliquity in conduct. Let not, then, the presumptuous find shelter from the stings of conscience ; or the timid Christian distress himself by considering those views, and opi-

nions, and feelings, as the *immediate* result of Satanic agency, which are, in fact, produced by the perversion of his own mind: but rather let him pray to be led into all truth, and strive to redeem the time; and, in the strength of the Lord God, to recover that original perfection of the spiritual principle in which our first parent was created.

It will not be necessary to enter again fully on the general influence of physical temperament, in modifying the expression of religious feeling;* but a few words of explanation are due, in this place, to the candid and Christian remarks of H. B., in the "Christian Observer," for October, 1828. I am fully disposed to allow, that visions of angels, and other appearances, have been seen by patriarchs, and prophets, and primitive Christians; but I have before stated *why* we are not to expect a continuation of these extraordinary revelations, and *why* we should consider them as improbable.

But further: the alleged circumstances are very different. It is manifest, from the cases recited by H. B., that there was always *an*

* For his views on this subject, the Author would refer to his Essay in the "Christian Observer" for 1828, of which it is his intention to place a more expanded view before the public.

object to be accomplished by the revelation ; and that, for the most part, it was forming a portion of that inspiration which was necessary for the accomplishment of the intended revelation of the whole will of a God of infinite mercy, to his sinful, wandering creatures. How dissimilar is this from the supposed vision of angels, and the revelation of the heavenly glory of Christ, and of the world to come, to expiring mortality, with no object to be answered, no end to be realized.

Another important difference consists in the peculiar condition of the organ of mind. In all the instances alleged by H. B., its integrity was unimpaired ; the individuals were in high health ; and their internal consciousness enabled them to perceive, what it had pleased the Almighty Ruler of the universe to reveal. This is easily conceivable ; but such is the constitution of our nature, that, although this internal revelation cannot be perceived by the organs of sense ; yet the individual recipient of such communication will only become aware of the revelation by attending to it, and perceiving it : and it will only be influential by his reflecting upon it, and remembering it ; and by his determining, in the strength of divine grace, to receive it by faith, as a revelation from God ;

and in the power of the Lord God to act upon it.

But attention, perception, reflection, memory, judgment, and volition, are intellectual faculties, whose functions are performed through the *medium* of the brainular organ; and it is only through this medium that the subject is conscious of the revelation he has received. Although a revelation, or vision, be made to the interior mind or soul; the compound man becomes conscious of such revelation, and communicates it to others, *only* through the medium of a bodily organ: and therefore, according to all analogy of the perfection of the Divine government, it would be expected that it should be made when that organ was in a state of health or perfectness.

But the period is now only marked on the page of prophetic and sacred history, when such revelations from on high were necessary; and I return to the observation, that it should be recollected, "that the spirit, though hovering on the verge of an eternal scene, is still confined to its material tenement; and that, whatever it may perceive, is *through the medium of that corporeal habitation.*" This remark of course supposes that there is now *no miraculous interposition* of God's providence (the idea involved in the consideration of internal revela-

tion to fallen man;) and we have considered this communication as *unlikely*, because the days of vision and prophecy have passed by; because it is unnecessary; and because such recorded revelations have been made in an integral state of the cerebral function.

Moreover, these visions are referred to the bodily senses; for the patient commonly points to a particular part of the *room* in which he has seen the angels, witnessed the Saviour's cross, or enjoyed revelations of the glory of the future world; and at the same time he is usually suffering from other ocular spectra, and perpetually endeavouring to take hold of objects which *appear* before him, but which, in fact, have no real existence.

Besides, I must in truth appeal to the records of my professional experience; and I must state, that these visions are by no means confined to the death-bed of the Christian, who rests from his labour, and whose works do follow him,—but that they have also attended the closing scene of those over whom, in the judgment of the most expansive charity, we could have no hope; who, during life, had never exhibited the fruits of faith, obedience, and love to God; and who, at the last, had not shown that patience, and submission, and acquiescence in

the will of Heaven, which we should naturally expect from those over whom we could rejoice with *confidence*, or even rest in assured hope of their resurrection unto life eternal.

But, further; this state, namely, the vision of angels, and revelation of future glory, is common to the *maniac*; who, in his hallucinations, mixes up himself as a principal actor in these glorious scenes, but who still details them with a sufficient degree of approach to truth and consistency, to be classed under the same view. If, then, the particular vision in question be common to the unrighteous, as well as to the righteous: and if its traces be clearly visible in the delirations of the insane; surely, is it not more wise and prudent, more just to God, and more consonant to *his* dealings with mankind, to believe that this appearance really owns a bodily origin, and is to be ascribed to the imperfect, failing, or perverted powers, of the organ of mental manifestation?

This result leaves entirely intact all the revelations of Scripture; which are of a totally different order, and which, in mercy and in love to poor perishing sinners, have been vouchsafed to man, for the establishment of his faith, the extension of his hope, and the increase of his knowledge. Although, therefore, I fully

agree with H. B., that such things have been under a different situation of the Christian world, and of the church, I cannot accede to his position, that *such things are*, until the preceding facts and arguments are refuted. Possibly, under some future great change, such things may again be; but of this we are not called upon to determine.

The charge of enthusiasm, or superstition, is not preferred against H. B., or against any one who differs from me: for, in the first place, I do not believe that it would attach to him; and, according to my own principles, the precise point of light, in which facts, and views, and opinions, are received by the individual, do very greatly depend upon his physical temperament, and upon its peculiar state, as influenced by health or disease. This, of course, does not affect the truth of any particular point: but it *does affect the impression of that truth*, and the zeal and earnestness with which it is received; or the caution, and doubt, and prejudice, which absorb and enthrall the mind.

CHAPTER XI.

On Presentiments.—Omens;—the case of martyrs, and their extraordinary, supernatural aid;—opinions of Dr. Hibbert, and of the author of “Past Feelings Renovated.”

WE must now say a few words on the subject of what are called *presentiments*.

I apprehend that, in every instance, presentiments may be referred to some antecedent physical or moral impression, and to its near or distant associations, however difficult it may be to trace them, and however illogically they may seem to be concatenated.

Strong testimonies have been urged to prove that individuals under the influence of magnetism, or, as it has been perhaps more correctly designated, magnetic somnambulism, possess the power of predicting the day, the hour, the severity, the duration, of an attack; for instance, of hysteria or epilepsy, and of various other

bodily states. Now if these testimonies are valid, (if they are not, we cut the Gordian-knot at once by denying the existence of presentiment,) there may be a peculiar state of the brain, produced by disease, as well as artificially induced by the agency of animal magnetism, in which it may be enabled to feel the approach of any great disaster to the constitution.

But even if the possibility of such a case were admitted, it cannot be believed to be of frequent occurrence; and with this single alleged exception, presentiments may be always traced to antecedent powerful impression upon an anxious mind. There are two grounds on which this conviction is founded; first, that frequently the expected results are not realized; and, secondly, that even when they are so, coincidence will often offer a just explanation; and, if not, the influence exerted by the presentiment itself upon the brain, and, through it, upon all the other functions of the body, will be sufficient to induce a morbid state, which will border on the very verge of distraction. In order to be admitted as *consequential*, the results should be invariable, and should have no tendency to produce themselves; whereas they are confessedly rare, and these rare instances

may easily arise from the physical influence of the first morbid impression.

To illustrate these positions by example : A. B. told me that he had a presentiment of his approaching dissolution, and that medicine would be of no avail ; for that his days were numbered, his hour was determined, and he must die. Upon inquiry, he referred this impression to the "*abundant revelations* which he had received." It is scarcely necessary for the author of the present Essay to add, that he thought differently from his patient ; neither need he point out the source to which both the presentiment and the revelations were conjointly referred. Under the influence of medicine, this patient recovered perfectly ; a proof of the absence of truth in the prediction of the sick man, and of the delusion under which he had laboured relative to these supposed spiritual communications from on high ; the whole of which had evidently resulted from the influence of disease upon the intellectual organ of a highly enthusiastic individual. Of such cases I have known many, greatly exceeding those of an opposite description, of which, however, several have occurred to me. The following instance shall suffice, as an example taken from the genus.

C. D. became the subject of disease ; for the effectual removal of which, a surgical operation was necessary. Upon its being proposed to the patient, she consented unhesitatingly, but affirmed that she should die from its consequences. No danger being really apprehended from the operation, a day was fixed for its performance ; and it was discovered afterwards, that the patient had employed her time in the interval, in arranging her little domestic affairs, placing her drawers in order, attaching labels to her keys, and leaving the minutest directions behind her, that no confusion, or as little as possible, might ensue upon her decease. The hour for the operation arrived ; it was most skilfully performed by the first British surgeon of his day, and was supported by the patient with the utmost fortitude. Upon being afterwards congratulated by her medical attendant, on the good prospect of complete recovery which was before her, she only repeated her conviction that she should die ; and, in fact, in three days she was a corpse. Now, though the want of invariability in the result would be quite sufficient to show that such an impression could not emanate from an *unchanging God* ; yet in the present case it must be manifest, how great an influence this deep, absorbing, and

exclusive feeling must have exerted upon the physical system; depressing its power of vitality; depriving it of the means of resisting the slightest shock to its integrity; and predisposing it to that irritation and inflammatory action, which so frequently blast the fairest prospect of recovery, as well as undermine the power of successful re-action, by which this result was to have been naturally effected.

Presentiment is sometimes supported by a variety of alleged *warnings*, or *omens*, which are considered as indicative of *some* fatal event; though they may fail to define its particular nature, or the individual for whom the intimation is given. Generally speaking, it is supposed that these are tokens of death to the individual remarking them, or to some of his friends or connexions. This is certainly taking a tolerably extensive range for the truth of the vaticination; but even this is not sufficient.

So active is the busy passion of *fear*, that the disparity of numbers in a little social meeting; the ticking of the death-watch; a peculiar uneasy chirping of the cricket; the croaking of a raven; the appearance of a winding-sheet on the candle, and a thousand other supposed omens, have struck terror into the hearts of the fearful, and sometimes, by the very influence of

this terror upon the physical system, have given most undeservedly an air of truth to the presage, by the illness and death which have followed.

In the case of E. F., who was labouring under most serious and alarming illness, one feature of which was profuse hemorrhage from the nose, it being very hot weather the window was kept open during the whole night. It so happened, that a *dog* was observed to howl most piteously under the window; a *death-watch* repeated its ominous monitions behind the bed; a *bat* flew into the room and extinguished the candle; and a *raven* passing, alighted upon the window-ledge, pecked with his beak, and flapped his wings against the (other) *unopened window*. Of course, the nurses all concluded that E. F. must inevitably die; but E. F. recovered, and the whole concurrence of circumstances would find an easy explanation in the attraction afforded by the light to the bat, its irritation to the watchful dog, the odour of blood to the ill-omened croaker, and perhaps the animating summer weather to the ticking insect.

But the writer has seen all these omens falsified in a hundred cases; and it is clear, that if the predicted consequences shall only follow

in a few instances, they must constitute exceptions to the rule,—not the rule itself; and must be unworthy of serious consideration. Besides, the veriest accident; atmospherical changes; the peculiar, but natural action of the insect; and a certain constitution of the air consumed by the candle, or some other mode of regulating its admission, will seem to explain all these influences, and to place them upon a basis which removes them greatly from our present range; referring them to mental ignorance, rather than to corporeal impression; only the agency of the former upon the latter must never be forgotten.

Farther, the simple, groundless, inexplicable *presentiment*, will be often found independently of these portents, and where this is the case, it is referable, for the most part, to a physical state of animal depression, attendant upon the incubation of disease, and may generally be considered as of no consequence; yet it does occasionally exert such a formidable and injurious influence upon the malady with which it is placed in contact, that it tends to throw a semblance of truth around *itself*, by the morbid sympathies which *itself has developed*, while it has diminished the vital energy of resistance to disease, and of the inherent power possessed

by the animal frame to restore its healthy functions, where the balance has once been destroyed.

Happy they, who, escaping from the thralldom of ignorance, and its fearful imagery, are enabled to trace the finger of God in all the events of life; to refer them, with their manifold results, to the wise and arbitrate will of the Supreme; and to trust in his care all they hold most dear, even where they cannot trace the footsteps of his power. All this frightful brood are called into being by the absence of a simple trust and sure confidence in God: and the knowledge of this should lead us to watch and pray against their influence; since to distrust him is to dishonour him, and to dishonour him is sin.

The case of *martyrs*, and the extraordinary composure with which they have endured torments, has, on the one hand, been mixed up with the idea of spiritual agency; and, on the other, has been referred by Dr. Hibbert to a certain physical condition, in which great suffering not only ceases to be painful, but becomes, he says, the *source of grateful sensation*. Now, the idea that *pain* can change its nature, cease to be such, and commute its peculiar attributes for the manifestations of *pleasure*, is

certainly too absurd to be endured ; and only shows how far a favourite hypothesis may delude the mind into *unreal creations*; ; and thus actually becomes a proof, how very far a peculiar physical condition of the reasoning organ may operate in perverting the manifestations of mind.

This opinion of Dr. Hibbert has subjected him to the merited castigation of the author of a recent work on the subject of supernatural manifestations, entitled, "*Past Feelings Renovated*," who, however, errs equally on the opposite side of the question. The case of Theodorus is referred to by *both* these writers, in proof of their respective positions. It is related of him, that he underwent a continuous torture for ten hours. "While enduring the extremity of pain, he was comforted by (as he conceived) a bright messenger from heaven, who allayed his sufferings, by wiping the perspiration from his body, and by pouring cold water upon his irritated limbs, till he was free from pain. It is a fact, that the martyr continued upon the scaffold in the sight of all men, smiling, and even singing, until it was thought expedient to take him down." This was conceived to be in consequence "of supernatural interposition ; and why should we doubt it?"

This example will afford a good opportunity of offering a few remarks on this question, as it affects the case of *martyrs* in general.

With regard to this particular instance, which is a very common example of the genus, if we allow its truth, we must also embrace its circumstances; by which we must go farther than even the admission of *spiritual* agency; for we must recognize the *material* action of wiping away perspiration, the presence of a *material* something by which it was absorbed, and the actual *material* affusion of cold water, and of the action by which its application was made. But if so, the laws of nature must have been interfered with, and a *miracle* is produced. But this is not contended for; and if it were so, the cause would be at once removed from the present question of *spiritual* agency. How then are the facts to be explained? Most readily.

In the first place, the mind of the martyr will have been subjected, long before the period of martyrdom, to the conflicting influence of the fear of bodily suffering on the one hand, and of a prominent desire to be found a faithful witness of the truth, even unto death, on the other; while the depressing agency of the former will have been gradually superseded, by the prospect of that glorious inheritance,

even the crown of life, promised to the good and faithful servant and soldier of Jesus Christ. The result of this frequent contemplation will be a firm reliance on the support promised from on high ; a sure trust and confidence in the comforting and sustaining presence of *Him* who has promised to be with his people in their hour of extremity. As the period of final suffering approaches, the feelings will be more highly wrought upon : and the temporary agonies of dissolution will be more constantly contrasted with the glory which shall follow, and which will be realized at death. Then, again, there will be a prominent desire to prove the sincerity of faith in Christ, by complete obedience to his will ; this will be accompanied by a very great effort to *bear* the allotted torture, and to sustain the evidence for truth, by showing the firmness of real belief in its doctrines, and their power to support the mind, under the most painful circumstances, without a murmur, or an expression of impatience. These are powerful motives to *mental effort* ; but there yet remains to be considered their *bodily influence*.

The agency of these continued powerful impressions upon the *brain* will be such as to exalt its vitality, to increase its energy, to call

up an extraordinary supply of blood, to augment its natural powers of manifestation, to continue a degree of excitement, by which the patient is carried out of himself; he is animated by the glow of enthusiasm, (the word has its good, as well as its bad sense,) and his feelings are wrought up to extacy. Now this is a brainular state, and one which predisposes to the creation of supernatural appearances; and it would not be surprising, if the real mental support and consolation, promised to those who wait upon God, and especially vouchsafed under these circumstances, should by the martyr, in his *ecstatic state*, be mistaken for extraordinary spiritual agency, and should thereby be invested with a form and locality which are really the result of long-excited brainular action.

The Christian has nothing to fear from this view of the subject; the promised strength from on high, strength equal to his day, *is* vouchsafed, but it is afforded by the ordinary assistance of the Holy Spirit: it is conveyed through the medium of second causes, and *not* by the intervention of a supernatural creation; by leading the mind into all truth, and not by the perversion of its imagination; by the sure *word of God*, and not by the presence of an

angel. The latter fancied appearance is a brainular illusion, from which the disciple of Christ should pray to be delivered.

Nor let it be conceived, that this purely *physical condition*, is *unequal* to the effect produced. Let it be recollected that there is no instance of fortitude in the Christian martyr, which has not been paralleled by the unyielding endurance of the greatest ingenuity of torture by the heathen,—by him, of whom it may justly be said, that God was not in all his thoughts,—because he would not suffer his enemies to triumph over an extorted groan: he has even told them how to augment his sufferings, and has exulted in showing the most unshaken fortitude, amidst the most appalling trials to human strength and constancy of purpose. This may be called *infatuation*. Granted: yet here, the mere motives of the man acted in producing such an ecstatic excitement of the brain, that the individual rose above physical suffering, was lifted out of himself, and would not grieve the spirits of his ancestors, by exhibiting the slightest symptom of degenerate courage.

O, suffer not the Christian's hope and consolation to rest upon a similar superstitious basis: but let him humbly rely upon that

strength which has been promised in the performance of duty : let him diligently seek for support in prayer, in the word of God, and in waiting upon him ; and then he will be enabled, in the promises of the Gospel, to realize the Saviour's presence with his suffering children ; let him strive to imitate Him who knows all our infirmities, and was himself made perfect through sufferings : above all, let him look to *his* sufferings upon the cross, and during his last agony, and let him contemplate for what and for whom he suffered ; so that the firmness of his principles, the reality of his faith, and their efficacy to support him, shall be demonstrated, and shall present a rational, a well-grounded, and a lovely example of Christian fortitude.

CHAPTER XII.

Agency of evil spirits. — Possession ; — demonomania ; — temptation ; — astrology ; — doctrine of apparitions ; — spiritual contemplation ; — peculiar physical state.

THE agency of *evil spirits* is so nearly connected with this part of the subject, that it presents a just claim to consideration before we proceed further.

The principal forms in which we meet with this variety of superstitious influence, are those of *supposed possession*, and *alleged temptation*. Almost every hamlet has its traditional legend of the former state, or its actual habitation of some “*cunning woman*,” or witch, or other pretender to supernatural information ; and in almost every coterie will be found some mind under the actual agency of *temptation*. With these views are associated various processes,

by which the power and presence of the evil one are to be evoked or deprecated ; and a whole host of excuses, for a particular line of conduct or thought, which conscience admonishes is wrong, and which reason and religion prove, on other grounds to be indefensible.

1. With *possession*, as far and as frequently as it may be the result of fraud or imposture, we have nothing to do ; but instances are to be met with, in which it is verily believed by the patient, and has been adopted as an absorbing and exclusive idea ; and it then forms a variety of religious melancholy, under the appellation of demonomania. This, with other indications of insanity, is to be referred to a peculiar bodily condition, and is attended by certain morbid manifestations of mind, which originate in a diseased state, either primary or secondary, of the intellectual organ. Its classification, as a variety of *melancholy*, would show, that the ancients believed it to originate in a disordered secretion of *bile* ; and indeed it is very certain, that irritation of the liver has a decided influence in throwing a sombre cloud over all the present, as well as the future events of life. But I am more disposed to believe, that in this case the *first* link in the chain of morbid action will be found in the *brain itself* ; and that the

disturbance of the digestive functions, is a *consequence*, rather than a *cause*, of such irritation, though it may afterwards tend to keep up, and even ultimately to aggravate, the operation of the originating cause.

This view of the subject is borne out by considering the circumstances of the malady. In the first place, there will be found to have existed a general predisposition to insanity. General ignorance, and contracted mental manifestation, will show how little attention and cultivation have been bestowed upon the intellectual organ: the patient is remarkable for mental feebleness and pusillanimity; thus proclaiming a want of brainular energy, and of intellectual expansion. Previously to the fully-formed paroxysm of malady, it will be found that the mind has been under the influence of prolonged disquietude, fear, or even terror; and these very generally own their commencement in false and erroneous opinions on the subject of religion, arising either from an injudicious statement of its real truths, or from partial and exclusive views; or from placing too great dependance on mere feelings and emotions, rather than on the sentiments—the results of sound judgment and a spiritually enlightened understanding; or from such a

degree of physical nervous irritation, that the rays of religious comfort do not reach the mind through the material veil which disorder of cerebral function has drawn around its perceptions.

Again: all these causes of disturbance will be mutual re-agents with accumulating force; and after a certain degree of conflicting and anxious attention, the false notions take possession of the individual, and, beyond an ineffectual struggle, claim their supremacy—a supremacy of disease. Now it will be seen, that the remote causes of this malady operate rather immediately than intermediately upon the brain; and that its irritation is to be traced rather to mental than to bodily sources. This opinion is strengthened by the fact, that these views have become less frequent, and exert a diminished influence, exactly in proportion as knowledge has become diffused; as the Scriptures of truth have been rendered more accessible, and as they have ceased to be a dead letter, by the extension of religious education, and of juster views on the subject of God's dealings with his sinful children.

That this state is the result of brainular irritation, is still further shown by the prevailing disposition to suicide by which it is accompanied.

Far be it from the author to diminish the awful responsibility of those who put a period to their existence, and rush unbidden into the presence of their Maker and Judge, with an act of aggravated treason on their hands : far be it from him to palliate the crime of suicide, or even to insinuate that in the majority of cases it is an act of insanity. On the contrary, he verily believes that it too frequently arises from a determination to get rid of present sorrow and perplexity at any hazard, and, of course, from a practical disbelief of the tremendous risk involved in this act of disobedience. But the energy and extent of moral responsibility will never be invaded by the development of just views ; nor by defining the boundary of moral accountability from the limits of physical impulse.

To apply these principles to the present instance : the patient verily believes himself possessed by evil spirits, rejected by God, sold to Satan, and hurried on to do his will ; so that he finally commits an act which, according to his own showing, would place him immediately under the tormenting influence of the evil one ; and would make him realize the fire which he has complained of as existing in his brain—the hell of his bosom—the worm that dieth not, and the fire that is not quenched. Now this is

not sound, and certainly not scriptural, reasoning. To do that which seals present suffering with an irrevocable doom—a doom, too, which might have been avoided—is not legitimate reasoning; and the act which results from its awfully tremendous perversion, must, in the judgment of truth and charity, be considered an insane act. Far otherwise the petulant impatience of him who thoughtlessly rushes from present pain, upon the desperate venture of presumed annihilation,—or even upon a recklessness of futurity; for, on the supposition that this were depending upon ignorance, in this happy country at least, it must be voluntary, inexcusable, and therefore sinful.

But again, with regard to *temptation*.—This term often signifies trial, and is then an expression of that life of probation in which we are placed, for the exercise of faith and patience; and, generally, of the Christian character. But this is not the acceptation of the term with which we have now to do: it is rather a supposed enticement by Satan, or his angels, to commit that which is hateful in the sight of God. Now this is either a physical or a moral state; but in neither case is it supernatural.

It may first be a physical condition; as, for example, in the history of G. H., who has often

consulted me for varying states of health. At one time, he has referred to certain morbid manifestations of mind, and temptations to sin, which he has ascribed to Satanic influence : and at another period has begged of me to define the respective limits of physical and moral agency, and to assist him in distinguishing the former influence from that of natural corruption, or predisposition to evil ; particularly as exhibited in that spontaneous or involuntary thought, which must arise from the prevalence of certain mental constitutions, or must be the effect of nervous irritability ; so satisfied was he, in his better moments, that much of what he experienced depended upon a varying condition of *the organ of mind*. This latter state will very generally be accompanied by other uneasy sensations, and morbid mental manifestations, which will define its nature, and clearly point to the diseased organ ; since disorder of function necessarily implies a disturbed and irritated state of the organ by which the function is carried on ; and, in the case before us, the brain has been shown to be that organ. This, however, is not always obvious : but then, the impression will very seldom want the characteristic of unreasonableness ; that is, it will be without

a solid basis of truth, and it will not be removable by its light.

It is not intended to deny the influence of the spirit of evil, but merely to place the subject upon a just foundation; and to show, that the enticements of their own lusts is the same principle which produced the fall of our first parents; and which now operates upon their posterity, as it did also upon them, through the medium of their sensorial and intellectual capacities,—now augmented by the consequences of that fall, and by the introduction of those depraved mental states which render the spiritual principle assailable to the influence of sin; or which, in other words, prepare it for listening to the voice of temptation. We fully believe that Satan, as a roaring lion, goeth about, seeking whom he may devour; but we believe that his agency is exerted, and his power to harm us, is conferred by that sin which reigns in our *mortal bodies*.

Now the simple scriptural truth is, “that every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lusts and enticed.” And the sequel is most just: “Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.” This, then, is the beau-

tiful explanation of temptation, against which we are taught to watch and pray. It consists in the supremacy of corrupt principles or passions, propensities, or views, called into action by that evil change which has passed upon man, when he fell from his first estate; and which now operates in producing alienation of the heart from God, and rebellion of the will against his holy law. And the gradual increase of this corruption, from the first *leaning* of the heart towards that which is evil, to its full accomplishment in action; and to its final consummation in the cessation of spiritual life, and the universal devastating reign of spiritual death, are here beautifully portrayed.

The same cause will operate the perversion of the intellectual faculties, and will explain how error is embraced, and nurtured into prejudice; and why it maintains the human soul divine in a state of darkness and destitution, from which nothing can recall it but the ray of scriptural truth, vivified by the Spirit of the most high God. But this omnipotent Spirit deigns to employ means; and these will always be consistent with truth, and will ever tend to promote the glory of God and the good of man: to both which objects the extension of his know-

ledge, and the chastened development of his mental powers, seem indispensable ; and not less so, the government of his heart, and the regulation of his desires, by the unerring law of God.

It will not be expected that I should notice the miserable impostures of fortune-telling, casting nativities, and developing the horoscope ; or draw aside the veil which invests the whole science of divination and astrology ; because these are manifestly the result of evil intention, and cannot, therefore, with propriety be referred to a physical state. We shall therefore pass on to the several points of interest involved in the last object of our attention ; namely, the *mystery of apparitions* : and, in particular, the question—Can they be explained upon any satisfactory principle ?

The more usual forms of alleged supernatural appearance are those in which some deviation from the common processes of nature, as settled by its Divine Author, has been supposed to be produced for the purpose of occasioning a certain spiritual impression ; in which individuals, just as they have ceased to live, have presented themselves to others for the purpose of giving an intimation of their death—oftentimes for *no*

conceivable design ; and the spectral forms of such as are supposed to haunt particular spots, in order to reveal crime, or to give some other important information to the living.

Now if we can succeed in showing that there is a peculiar state of the brain, in which such appearances are not unusual, and that this is a *morbid* state ; if we can show that *this* is the result of impending disease, and that it may be produced by the exhibition of certain remedies ; if we can further prove, that the anticipated results have not, in every instance, followed ; and if we can account for some of the most remarkable instances of apparitions, upon natural principles, we shall not wander far from the truth when we adopt a physical interpretation for these same appearances.

It has sometimes been observed by those who disbelieve in apparitions, and with a kind of triumphant air, that a *ghost* was never seen by *two* persons at the same time. But this is no argument ; for the very nature of the case supposes that it is a spiritual not a material existence ; and therefore not cognizable by the external senses, but only perceived by the internal. In the very nature of things, therefore, that which is immaterial can only be

perceived by the one mind to which it is presented,—or to two or more minds, individually acted upon by a similar spiritual agency. In giving up this objection to ghosts, it will however be seen, that this very abandonment of an untenable position involves a corollary, fatal to all those relations in which *material attributes have been ascribed to them*. It will be seen hereafter, that this principle admits of an important application to one of the most frequently quoted histories of apparitions after death; namely, that of Lord Tyrone to Lady Beresford, which will be considered in a future chapter.

Apparitions are ascribable, in a great number of instances, to *trick*, and are generally produced for some sinister purpose; and then the science of optics and the resources of chemistry will afford many useful explanations, and will account for a large majority of the most far-famed ghost stories.

But there are many other histories which cannot thus be explained, and which must either be admitted as actual spectral appearances of a *supernatural character*, or be considered as *physical products*, the result of a peculiar morbid state of the brain, which may be traced to irritation of that organ.

This peculiar state may be, and indeed frequently is, induced by the pressure of impending disease; and then the supposed appearance will be followed by morbid excitement of the system (febrile action), which is now often ascribed to the influence of *emotion* excited by the spiritual appearance; whereas, in fact, the subsequent commotion is a mere consequence of the previously disordered state of the brainular function. This peculiar condition of the brain *may* likewise originate in intense mental emotion, particularly of a depressing character. I shall presently produce examples of these states, always preferring those which have fallen under my own notice.

But before we proceed further, we must add another word, on the subject of *spiritual contemplation*.—It has been said, that an apparition is in fact presented to *spiritual contemplation*; that it is cognizable by *mental perception* alone; and that the truth of its existence is based upon this principle, that the *idea* is *conceived in the mind*. Dr. Hibbert, on the contrary, says, that it is a *renovation of past feelings*, with all the energy of truth, and all the vividness of an intensely interested imagination. Neither of these views is quite satisfactory.

It is agreed by all parties, that an apparition

has no real and material existence—no flesh and bones ; and that although presented to the eye, and heard by the ear, it yet possesses no tangible substance ; that it cannot intercept or transmit, absorb or reflect, the rays of light ; and is incapable of producing those atmospheric vibrations, which are necessary for the propagation of sound. It may, therefore, in this respect, be said to be an ideal object conceived in the mind, or to be the product of spiritual contemplation. But spiritual contemplation is that process during which the immaterial principle perceives, thinks, reflects, associates, remembers, reasons.

Of the *nature* of spiritual existence, when separated from matter, we know nothing ; and of the modes and habits of thought and feeling of pure spirit, we equally know nothing. Moreover, we become *conscious* of these operations within ourselves, only through the medium of the brainular organ,—the appointed channel for the manifestations of mind.

But if there be any disorder of function on the part of that organ ; if it shall have received such a powerful mental emotion as shall have excited it vehemently ; or if it shall be suffering from the threatened invasion of impending disease ; it will cease to be a *perfect* medium for

conveying the results of spiritual contemplation; the manifestations of mind will be perverted, and spectral illusions will be the result.

And this view of the cause will be invariably borne out by the circumstances of the case. Some anxious state, some depressing passion, or some morbid cerebral condition, will have preceded the creation of the apparition. And, in simple truth, the semblance of form, and defined outline, which so generally attaches to this kind of supernatural appearance, should be enough to proclaim illusion somewhere; for, at all events, the senses are deceived, and this must be attended by deviation from the healthy action of the mental manifestations.

And since this can alone be dependent upon some morbid condition of the manifesting organ, either temporary or permanent, we have reasoned back to the assertion, that the brain under these circumstances is *always* in a *morbid* state; in fact, that it is subjected to that "*peculiar condition in which it has escaped the controul of the presiding mind, and continues to act on without direction or guidance.*"

On the contrary, the position that apparitions are the result of past images recalled in the mind; in fact, recollected impressions of scenes long lost, only grotesquely associated, with an

undue degree of intensity, is equally unsatisfactory and unconvincing ; for,

In the first place, this hypothesis will not account for *all* supposed supernatural appearances ; such, for instance, as that which made so powerful an impression on Colonel Gardiner, and similar spectra which have been experienced by many others ; and if the theory be inapplicable to *all* the particular cases, which it ought to explain, we have good ground for suspecting that is not THE correct explanation of ANY, however it may seem to account for many of the attendant phenomena satisfactorily.

Secondly ; the hypothesis will not account for the recalling of these recollected impressions at the precise moment at which apparitions are produced ; since, if they were only recollected impressions, there can be no good reason why they may not be created at any time, especially by a voluntary effort of memory : *a fortiori*, therefore, is it most extraordinary, not only that they cannot be reproduced by *any* effort of volition, however powerful, but that their appearance is actually independent of the will ; and, moreover, that it is to be met with only and invariably, during the continuance of a state of morbid irritation of the brain ?

Thirdly ; this hypothesis will not account for

the fearfulness with which an apparition is viewed. Ideas familiar to the mind, recollected impressions of past scenes and persons removed, when recalled by the aid of memory, do not produce terror; but, on the contrary, a chastened satisfaction, or a mellowed sorrow: and this valuable mental attribute delights to dwell on the dear forms of those whom we have lost, and to contemplate the mental manifestations associated with such cherished remembrance. But the sudden and involuntary appearance of this very form, when suggested to the mind, produces a *saisissement*, which the system can scarcely sustain consistently with the integrity of its functions; and which plainly indicates an *unusual or morbid state of the manifesting organ*, namely, *the brain*.

CHAPTER XIII.

Critical inquiry into the views of a recent writer in the
Record, on the subject of apparitions.

THE present seems to be a proper opportunity for noticing the observations of a valuable, though mistaken, writer in "The Record." This individual fears that sceptical notions may be fostered by referring dreams, apparitions, and the like, to a state of morbid irritation of the brain, the material organ of the mind.

"Men of this character," he remarks, "turn away their eyes from the operation of God's hand in nature and providence ; and therefore it is to be expected, that they should close them fast against any instance, even remotely tending to establish his existence, and his controul over the affairs of mankind." Again, adds the writer, "the position is, that spiritua

beings exist; *generally invisible* to mortal eye. The refutation, that their existence is disproved, from the impressions of their appearance only being received during the prevalence of a diseased state of the nervous system. This assertion, however, the accuracy of it being assumed, proves nothing. To see, or hear, or taste, or smell, or touch, the corresponding organs must be in a state of health. If they are disordered, the sensations are lost. They are frequently lost for a time, and again they resume their powers. But there may be other *disorders or alterations* in one or more of the senses, not of common occurrence, which do not, as in the usual cases of disease, strike out existing objects from the cognizance of the mind; but which present to its view *existing* objects, which, in the *healthy or usual state* of the organs, are not perceived."

Now I notice first, that the physiological principle upon which this argumentation proceeds, is not founded in truth, or supported by facts. It is indeed true, that there are organs adapted to receive the impressions of external nature, and to convey them to the brain; where, if that central organ of sensation be attentive to the impression, a distinct and adequate idea is formed of the object of sight, or

touch, or hearing, or taste, or smell. But it is not true, that if these organs are disordered the sensations are lost. It is not just, or scientific, to forget here, the important agency of the intellectual brain, in order to the completeness of an impression : nor is it correct to endow the organs of sense with a primary and full power; whereas their office is subordinate : they act as mere sentinels; and the power of receiving, or combining, considering, and weighing the results, rests entirely with the brain, and upon its attention to the notices it receives. Thus, therefore, mere impression is at all times unsatisfactory, till it has been referred to, and judged of, and estimated by, the presiding mind; which determines its truth and value, according to its possessing or to its wanting certain attributes.

But the sensations are *not lost* when these organs are disordered, at least, they are not so always, or even often. In fact, the loss of sensation must depend upon a temporary or permanently paralytic state of the sentient extremities of the nerves; a state of disease which is much more commonly referable to a condition of irritation of the brain, than of the local organ of sense. And even supposing the disorder to be confined to the proper or-

gan of sense, it will by no means follow that the sensation is *lost*; since that organ may be subjected to many varieties of irritation; and it will much more frequently happen, that its function shall be unduly excited, or that it shall be perverted, even to such an extent as to give rise to unreal impressions by its excessive activity, than that the sensation should be *lost*.

Moreover, this hyper-activity and perversion do very generally result from *primary* irritation of the brain, to which these impressions are communicated; and the result is, that sensorial illusions are not infrequent under such circumstances. Now it has been stated, that apparitions are intellectual illusions, proceeding from an irritated intellectual organ: consequently, the analogy of sensorial disease is strongly in favour of the position assumed in the present Essay.

That these sensations may be lost and restored, perverted and adjusted, excited and depressed, and this in frequent alternation, is borne out by every-day facts: and nothing is more common than the fluctuations between melancholy and excitation. The history of A. B. will illustrate this position. For many years his life has been passed in these succeed-

ing changes, not in rapid and sudden transition, but insensibly gliding into the one or the other form, exactly in proportion as the brain has been in a state of slight, moderate, or high excitement; or in the opposite condition of failing energy, oppressive languor, or absolute collapse: so that, perhaps, there can scarcely be said to have been one day in which the organ of mind has been free from morbid action; and, therefore, not one day in which its manifestations have been perfectly correct. Now the state of these manifestations may always be predicated from the more or less morbid brainular action, varying from the highest degree of bustling activity, and excessive interest, to the most perfect indisposition for action, and want of interest in every object. In the former case, there is the most unconquerable vigilance; in the latter, an equal tendency to sleep, which is rather courted than resisted, in order to escape from the oppressive tedium of existence. In the former there exists a high susceptibility to impression; in the latter, scarcely any possibility of receiving it: in both cases will be found perversion of sensorial influence. This patient will appear towards the close of our Essay, as having seen appari-

tions ; thus once more leading us back to the cerebral origin of these supposed spiritual creations.

Again : the existence of spiritual beings is not denied—very far from it ;—neither is it a question as to their functions : the real point in discussion is not this ; but, Whether certain apparitions, which have often been referred to spiritual agency, may not be accounted for more truly on another principle ?

It is allowed on all hands, that spiritual beings are not cognizable by the corporeal eye ; their existence, therefore, cannot be demonstrated, and must be received as a matter of faith. Now on this view of the subject we rest our belief : not, surely, on the treacherous foundation of merely human testimony, but on the sure word of God, which reveals to us the attributes and offices of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter and Sanctifier of the people of God ; and also speaks of good and evil spirits,—the former sent forth to minister to the heirs of salvation, the latter busied in alienating the soul from God, and tempting it away, by the voice of its own lusts, from the paths of religion and holiness. But of the mode of their access to the mind, or of their agency upon it, nothing is revealed. Certain, however, it is, that so

far as we know any thing of the functions of these spiritual existences, they differ in their essential character, and in every particular attribute, from modern apparitions. And since the latter do not usually lead to any beneficial result, or indeed to any result at all, we believe them to differ in their nature from the commissioned or permitted messengers of God's holy will. Therefore, as some instances of these alleged supernatural appearances have been distinctly traced to certain phenomena of bodily agency, we hold it to be most logical, most consistent with sound reasoning, most agreeable to revelation, and most honourable to God, to ascribe other *unknown*, but analogous and extraordinary phenomena, to a similar cause; and for this plain reason, that it is unnecessary and unwise to call in the aid of supernatural power, when a peculiar morbid state of the body will abundantly explain, for the most part, this supposed spiritual agency.

We must not reject this explanation, because it may not solve all the difficulties of the subject. Is there scarcely any natural problem of which we can unravel all the intricacies of action and passion, and motive and influence? Further, if we cannot explain *how* the bud of the future year is perfected in the autumn of

the present; *how* it is preserved, and in due time resumes its activity, expands its leaves, produces its flowers, and matures its fruits; is it surprising that we cannot develop *all* the laws of the finest and most complicated portion of the living machinery—the brain? Let us not be infatuated, and led away by high-sounding prejudice; but let us dwell in adoring gratitude upon the goodness and power of that Supreme and Holy Being, who has thus wisely constructed, and thus essentially protected, so delicate an organ from disease and injury, that its morbid associations, when they do occur, are looked upon with a vague and fearful interest, or an ignorant apprehension, which invests them with attributes they do not possess; and which induces many to call in the operation of spiritual influence, which they cannot explain at all, to account for a natural morbid state; which is in part explicable upon natural principles, but of which we cannot fathom all the peculiarities.

But again: the writer above alluded to goes on to remark, that there may be other *disorders* or *alterations* “in one or more of the senses, not of common occurrence, which do not, as in the usual cases of disease, strike out existing objects from the cognizance of the mind; but

which present to its view existing objects, which, in the healthy or usual state of the organs, are not perceived."

Now this argument assumes a point as settled, which might well be questioned; namely, the existence of apparitions as spiritual objects. For although we have allowed, and do verily believe in, the existence of *spiritual beings*, yet we have carefully distinguished between these and the common alleged apparitions. But leaving this objection, let us ascertain the exact meaning of the writer before us, which appears to be this: That as in the common or healthy state of the senses, or of the brain upon which these depend, man is unable to perceive spiritual objects; so there may be some disordered or altered condition of that organ, or some changed mode of *their* function, which shall give them the capacity of perceiving that which, in their normal relations, was withheld from their notice by the physical structure which encompassed them.

But if so, it should seem that a deviation from perfect action, that is, a morbid state, is supposed to be necessary for the *perception* of spiritual objects; and since the state of health is the most perfect state, it follows, that an imperfect, or altered, or diseased condition of the

brain, is necessary to the perception of these spiritual beings: so that the point in dispute is granted to a certain extent, or at least, it is resolved into this form, Whether apparitions in general be the creation of a peculiar mode of cerebral irritation; or whether apparitions, being real spiritual existences, this peculiar irritation is necessary to their perception.

Now if it be thus granted, that a morbid state must exist, it will surely be much more consonant with reason, and with our experience of the Divine government, that intellectual and sensorial illusions should be the production of irritated brain, rather than that *disease* should be produced in order to confer an additional power upon the brain, to enlarge its faculties, and to enable it to receive notices, which could in no other way be obtained. If the contrary position were assumed, who is to decide the kind and degree of this morbid state which may be necessary to confer the requisite additional power? and who is to distinguish between this morbid state and many forms of incipient insanity? That a morbid state exists, is allowed by all; that this state is produced in order to confer the power of supernatural vision, is assumed by the writer of the paper on which I am commenting; that it is in itself the cause

of alleged supernatural appearances, is contended for by the present essayist: and the issue is by him securely left to the decision of every unprejudiced mind.

That portion of the Sacred History to which the above-mentioned writer refers, ("And Elisha prayed and said, Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes that he may see. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw; and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire, round about Elisha," 2 Kings vi. 17,) is, throughout, the account of a *miraculous interference* of the God of Providence for the preservation of his servant and prophet. But we know that the age of miracles has ceased, and we do not now expect them; any reasoning, therefore, which is founded upon such a presumption, is clearly untenable, and contrary to the usual course of God's moral government of the world.

Further, there appears at the present hour to be an irritable dread of scepticism, as connected with this question. Now I believe that a tendency to scepticism exists, but not in the way which has been supposed. The human heart inclines to practical infidelity; it longs to forget its accountability; and it desires to live without God in the world. In this awful state

of alienation from God, it will prove a soothing and consolatory reflection, if it can be brought to believe that the existence of spiritual beings can only be perceived during the prevalence of a peculiar mental state, over which it has no kind of influence ; because it will naturally say, that other manifestations of mind of a morbid character may be placed to the score of some other mental irritation, equally dependent upon supernatural agency, and equally involuntary ; and thus moral responsibility is destroyed ; and disbelief of revelation treads very closely upon the footsteps of this fatal delusion. But if man's accountability be upheld, and the supremacy of his own will be maintained, and these supernatural appearances be accounted for as the result of brainular action, after it has been separated from the control of the presiding mind, by a physiological action, such as sleep ; or by a pathological condition, such as impending disease, he finds no way of escape for himself, and is brought back to the *holy law* of God which he has broken, and to the consequences which have flowed from its infraction.

Many excellent persons are afraid of the *liberality* of the day, and of the assumed expansion of intellectual manifestation with which it

stands connected. It is with them almost a proof of heterodoxy, if sentiments like the above are avowed : and to impugn the long received opinions as to the reality of apparitions, is placed to the account of a restless desire to be over-wise, and to explain natural phenomena without the intervention of a superintending Providence. But this is unfair, and inconsequential : for the more intimately we become acquainted with the rationale of the operations of God in the works of nature, the more must the heart be affected with the wisdom, and knowledge, and power, and goodness, and love, displayed in the endless and exquisite contrivances of his infinite mercy ; and the more will it rest with confidence on the moral agency of this all-perfect Being, and be prepared to serve him with full purpose of heart, and to receive with meekness and obedience the revelation of his will.

On the contrary, it requires the most inordinate stretch of imagination, to believe *all* the histories of apparitions with which our ears are assailed. Yet if the correctness of one tale be admitted, it will naturally be asked, why not believe all, since all rest upon the same basis, namely, *human testimony* ? This basis, however, unless where the testimony is full, and above

the possibility of mistake or error, is not a safe foundation for belief, since it is liable to be acted upon by so many *prejudices*, that its results are often erroneous, and demand the closest scrutiny. That is a species of spurious charity which affects a great degree of tenderness for the reports of individuals so circumstanced, while it estimates as very little worth the *explanations of reason and science*; and the declared experience, not of those who have never seen apparitions, but of those who, having seen them as much as their more credulous neighbours, have not been deluded into a belief of their reality, but have been enabled to account for them upon physical principles.

Surely the voice of reason and reflection, aided by the experience of the great majority of mankind, and supported by the known laws of physical temperament, as they affect the manifestations of mind, deserve an equal share of attention with the clamours of the illiterate, and the representations of the prejudiced few, in whom predominant fear has superseded the sober realities of life, and converted the effects of a morbid brainular condition, into an imaginary creation, which, by its hold upon the feelings, and by its powerful appeal to the passions, has carried the mind out of itself, has cast

away the anchor of sober reasoning, and has placed it in an ocean of conflicting elements, where it has ceased to be mistress of its own actions, and where it has yielded the helm of thought to the direction and government of the fancy.

And when to this part of the argument is added the fact, that the existence and agency of a supreme Superintending Power, is not called in question, but that his ways are justified, surely a very strong case is made out in favour of the hypothesis, that the supposed spiritual agency is for the most part ascribable to the action and operation of physical causes. *And yet such is now the case.* The providence of God is universally diffused; and so far as we can trace its ways, we find its actions governed by some *fixed principles*, and operating through the medium of natural means: therefore we do not expect an interference with the ordinary course by which he governs nature, except upon some occasion which would be of sufficient importance to account for such a deviation.

In the *moral* government of the universe, we find the same employment of *moral means*. The moral law is promulgated as the will of God for the guidance of his creatures; and grace

and strength are promised to those who seek them; the Holy Spirit to those who ask; the power and blessing of the Most High to such as diligently wait upon him in the way of his appointment. Then again, a great reward is promised to the righteous, to those who keep his laws, not as an act of merit, but as they are enabled to do so by the grace and strength vouchsafed in the employment of the prescribed means. The mansions of the blessed are prepared for those who hear the voice of the Great Shepherd, obey and follow him; the crown of glory is given to him that overcometh; the welcome reception of "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world," is reserved for those who had given food to the hungry, and drink to the thirsty; and had received the strangers and the houseless, clothed the naked, visited and succoured the sick and the wretched, and had extended aid to every form of misery, not simply to that which obtruded itself upon their notice, but which was by circumstances concealed from view. "Inasmuch as ye have done it," says Christ, "unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

Again, they who appear with white robes, with palms in their hands, are they "who have

come out of much tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb; therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple." God is a God of love, infinite in compassion, and of tender mercy; his invitations and urgent entreaties to sinners to turn unto him are unbounded. But in all these instances an appeal is made to the *moral constitution of man's mind*. And it is evident, that the Almighty long-suffering Jehovah sees fit to act rather upon the hopes than the fears of his creatures, so that the denunciations of his vengeance are only upon the finally impenitent. Yet no mention is made of supernatural agency; of deviations from the ordinary course of nature, or the revealed will of God; or of spiritual influence, except through the medium of moral means, and providential circumstances.

It is upon these that the mind should be fixed for the purpose of extracting a lesson of usefulness: here are to be found every where the traces of a supreme and Superintending Power of infinite goodness, and wisdom, and mercy; it is here that the ways of God to man are justified, and that he is left without excuse, if he refuses to receive Christ, and to obey his laws; whereas, if the reins be once given to

imagination, every kind of alleged supernatural influence must be admitted; every variety of vision, all the Protean forms of dreaming, every supposed apparition, all the voices that have ever been heard, all the chosen offspring of enthusiasm, all the unexplained lights and shades, all the contentions of good and evil spirits for the mastery, and every other creation of superstition, must be received as spiritual agents; the mind is lost in the wildest and most unlimited speculation; and, to say the very least, it has no means of judging whether the apparition has been produced to answer a good end, or only to deceive through the malignant influence of the arch-fiend.

Besides, so many instances have occurred in which no conceivable good could have been produced, that we are justified, even on this ground, in believing that such supernatural agency, or rather supposed agency, is inconsistent with the ordinary course of God's most perfect providence, and therefore is not lightly to be believed. When, moreover, a natural explanation can be found, for that which is not conceivable without much difficulty upon any other principle, it is the duty of the Christian, humbly to accept such explanation; especially when it offers a beautiful exposition of how far

the spiritual principle is modified in its manifestations, by the debasing influence of that primeval Fall, which separated man from his Maker, and occasioned the loss of the image of God upon his heart; by which he became "very far gone from original righteousness," and "the servant of sin."

So far then from impugning the wisdom, restraining the power, or limiting the agency of Omnipotence, by withdrawing it from the shadowy wand of superstition, his perfect knowledge, and his holy operation, are vindicated from the unhallowed creations of mortality; the vagaries of imagination are distinguished from the suggestion of his Spirit; the influence of the Word of God, and of that unwritten word which is found in the heart and conscience of every man, is defined and separated from those words, and that influence, which result from a disordered state of the animal fibre. Hope and fear, joy and sorrow, desire and love, obedience and transgression, are snatched from the dominion of supernatural influence, and are placed on a just basis; namely, the grace of God, which bringeth salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, revealed to us by his word, and by his providence, and received or rejected by the sinner.

In fact, *they* only impugn the power of Omnipotence who question the agency upon spiritual mind, *of its organic medium of manifestation* ; and who doubt, nay deny, that disorder of this material medium *may* be, or rather *must* be, followed by defective, or excessive, or perverted manifestation ; who deny, in fact, that *primary* or *sympathetic* irritation of the brain is insufficient to account for the appearances in question ; as if it were not in the power of Almighty God, to make as it hath pleased him an organ for this very purpose, and for the reception and communication of moral cause and effect. Let the humble and sincere Christian constantly lift his heart in adoration and gratitude to that beneficent Creator and Lawgiver, who preserves from disorder a function of such exquisite delicacy, and possessed of such fearful interest.

CHAPTER XIV.

Influence of nitrous-oxyde gas on the brain ;—agency of belladonna, stramonium, opium, hemlock, fox-glove, &c.—Various illustrative cases.—Influence of several mental excitants in the creation of apparitions.

THE influence of the nitrous-oxyde gas has been alluded to in this discussion, and it has been represented as capable of producing a state of the cerebral system, peculiarly favourable to the production of so-called apparitions. And this is true to a certain extent, inasmuch as it occasions that incipient morbid action which has been shown to be prolific of spectral visions and imaginings : but the more important truth has not been mentioned ; namely, that the effect of this article varies according to the peculiarity of physical temperament, or to the varying condition of that temperament at the moment.

Thus it affords an excellent exposition of two principles ; first, as to the creation of apparitions, and unreal images, from a cause operating *exclusively* on the brain and nervous system ; and next, that the *specific* character of these images, arising from the *same source* of *cerebral irritation*, will vary according to the expression of predominant constitution ; or to its fluctuating state at the time of receiving the morbid stimulus ; nay more, that, the peculiar temperament of the individual being given, the precise effect may be calculated beforehand.

Now the effect of inhaling the nitrous-oxyde gas will differ upon half a dozen specimens of the same creature, man. One shall be outrageously joyous and happy ; another shall be excited to the most incredible muscular efforts, till he sinks subdued by exhaustion ; a third shall exhibit the common symptoms of intoxication, after the first effects of alcoholic stimulus have passed ; a fourth will lose all power of volition and apparent consciousness, will seem abstracted from this world, and will tell of blissful visions ; and a fifth will sink into a state of stupid reverie, from which it is impossible to recal him, and from which he awakens in total oblivion of the interval between inhaling the gas, and his return to consciousness ; and all

these varying effects will have been produced in a few seconds.

Moreover, in all these variations of morbid action, there may be, according to the peculiar excitation or depression of the brainular system, the creation of unreal images or apparitions, which shall be presented to the patient with all the energy and vividness of truth. And further, this state is *exceedingly transient*, and will soon give way to a languid condition, arising from the feebleness consequent upon morbid excitement; and presently, to the resumption of the usual mental manifestations. But, if we trace all these effects to the influence of *one* physical agent operating upon the brain, and if we know that there are others of a similar, though not identical nature, it is not difficult to conceive that there may be *other morbid states* which will concur in the production of this particular influence. We shall here mention an illustration or two of this position.

A. B. had been taking the extract of belladonna (deadly nightshade,) for a painful affection of the nerves of the face. After a few doses had been exhibited, I was surprised one morning, on finding this lady conducted into the room by her servant, *because she could not see* : the pupil of her eye was dilated to the utmost, the retina

paralysed, and natural vision destroyed. Yet in this case, varying forms of exceeding loveliness and beauty, in quick and rapid succession, were presented to the mental contemplation.

This effect was transient, and soon gave way to appropriate treatment; and moreover, my patient was a lady of great intelligence, and was aware of the cause of these appearances: but had she possessed a contracted mind, or been ignorant or doubtful as to the physical influence under which she laboured, the apparitions would have been pronounced *supernatural*; and the simplest accidental brainular phenomena would have been dignified with an importance, which ought in justice to be reserved for proper occasions, but which in this case would have been constituted an object of superstitious hope, or fear, or reverence, according to the peculiar physical temperament of the patient, and the coincident predominance of cheerful, gloomy, or serious modes and habits of thought and action. Finally, let it be remarked, that in proportion as this morbid state subsided, the visions disappeared, and were completely gone when the optic nerve had thoroughly regained its power.

C. D. under the influence of stramonium, related to me the delight he had experienced

from the cessation of pain, from its soothing agency, but detailed, as a great inconvenience attending its employment, the numberless and grotesque forms and images with which he had been assailed during the night; these having become onerous from their constant repetition, and often disagreeable from their horrible grimaces. A similar effect has been observed from digitalis, aconite, solanum tuberosum, hyosciamus, opium, and other narcotic medicines. With regard to opium, its influence in the production of unreal images of persons and things, has been well described in the "Confessions of an Opium Eater;" a little pamphlet, which, with much to blame, and much that is fanciful, enthusiastic, and sinister about it, possesses the merit of being for the *most part* true to nature, and particularly as it respects the unreal world, into which the miserable patient is supposed to have been plunged by its operation.

The case of E. F. is an example of a very frequent state, that of a young person in the last stage of consumption, who on her death-bed became the subject of many blissful visions, when under the influence of the physical effects of opium. It has been before remarked, how greatly the associated manifestations of mind

are characterized by the peculiar organ which forms the point of irritation to the brain; and it has been mentioned, that in consumption of the lungs, the passion of hope generally predominates, and clings to the patient, even to the last expiring gasp, if the morbid actions be confined to that viscus; and *then* it is, that an excited state of the brain will occasion the production of angelic forms, which would have been exchanged for, or associated with, demons or other apparitions of terrific mien, had the stomach or liver been the primary source of mischief, or had disorder of these latter organs been combined with disease of the former.

The case just referred to was ascribed to supernatural spiritual agency; but it had clearly a bodily origin, and should have no weight with us in forming our estimate of the character, or in drawing our inferences of support under the trying circumstances of dissolution. The excellence of a truly consistent, and eminently pious, though highly susceptible, and perhaps enthusiastic patient, who “being dead, yet speaketh,” will afford to surviving mourners a more substantial ground of consolation, than the questionable manifestations of mind, under the influence of organic irritation, failing power, and medicinal agency.

A somewhat analogous instance is related in "Past Feelings Renovated," as an extract from "Foreign Scenes and Travelling Recreations," by Mr. Howison, in which the extraordinary state of the nervous system is traced to the influence of tobacco fumes : and this is followed by the history of a German student, who voluntarily subjected himself to the agency of hemlock, foxglove, deadly nightshade, and other narcotic herbs, for the purpose of obtaining the enjoyments arising from the "flood of ideas and images of the most *vivid, wonderful, and tremendous* description ;" which resulted, as he supposed, from having "partaken of a superhuman state of existence," but, in reality, from irritation of the brain.

Only let these facts be duly and dispassionately weighed, and it will be impossible to resist the conclusion, that alleged supernatural appearances and visions may be produced by the employment of medicine, occasioning a peculiar influence upon the brain ; this action partaking of the nature of disease,—in other words, becoming *cerebral irritation*. But if so, it will follow, that many phenomena usually ascribed to spiritual agency may be more correctly shown to be depending upon a peculiar condition of the body, especially of the brain.

Nor is this extraordinary: for since this viscus is the appointed organ for the manifestation of mind; since, as such, it is subjected to the general laws affecting organic life; since sin introduced death, and therefore, also that state of disease which, by its slow and successive accumulations, leads to the dissolution of life; since *general death* results from the prior decease of *one particular organ*, which associates with itself all the other organs of the body; and since the death of any one organ of the body will always be preceded by primary or sympathetic irritation of the brain; it will follow that every morbid state is really a result of the sad change which has passed upon all men; and *that every morbid state* affecting the organ of mind, will disturb its functions; so that the manifestations of the brightest intellect, or of the holiest soul, may be impeded, deranged, suspended, or stopped in death, by the irritation of its material medium of communication.

This point of doctrine is shown by the following remarkable history:—

X. Y. Z. about two years since became the subject of *moral causes*, which harassed him exceedingly, and which for a considerable time kept up continued irritation of the brain. He wanted peace of mind, and his health was un-

dermined. It should be premised, that X.Y.Z., though perhaps what the world might not term a very faulty character, was at this time very far below the standard of Christian morality, and that in fact much of his present annoyance arose out of his neglect of the commands of God involving him in situations of difficulty. One night, after retiring to rest, with these disturbing causes weighing upon his mind, and also *certainly not well*, he was awakened by the impression of hearing a conversation in the next house, which related to himself, and to the peculiar object of his lengthened solicitude; these also were associated with circumstances of a highly distressing character. He endeavoured, by getting up, to ascertain the truth of his impression: all was quiet in the next house, and the stillness of night rested upon its inhabitants: he returned to bed, but again heard the same voices. The remainder of the night was passed in no very enviable condition, and he went to his duties in the morning. As the day wore away, and he was about to return to his abode, the voices became loud, and threatening destruction to himself; so that he was afraid of returning home, lest he should have been torn in pieces: *his head felt as if on fire*; and finally, in order to escape from these

supposed enemies, he fled into the country, and wandered the whole night through the fields, and returned to the town where he dwelt, the next or the following day, but not to his own home; he obtained a lodging for the night elsewhere. Before the usual hour of rising in the morning, these voices informed him that the house of a friend was to be burned down, and he hastened with all the eagerness of irresistible impulse to acquaint him with the event. Here, however, he was kindly taken care of, and the attack subsided in a few days.

At this time, X.Y.Z. was not under the influence of religious motive or impression; and indeed, as has been stated, his conduct was not strictly consistent even with the outward requirements of the Decalogue. A little afterwards, and when *again* he was conscious of being more particularly poorly, he took a walk to —— (I suppress particular references), and was hurried into the fields by an impulse he knew not how to controul. Here a voice proclaimed to him, as from the clouds, that the millennial reign of Christ on earth had commenced, and that in that very spot the city of redemption would be built. At this time, he *saw the forms* of many whom he believed to be the happy spirits of the dead. He was *directed*

to kneel down and say his prayers, which he did. He was told to be *charitable*, and he obeyed this command by *indiscriminately giving* away the money he had in his pocket, to a crowd of persons upon the road, which his extraordinary manner had gathered round him. On the same occasion, he was directed to repair to a heath at some distance from his abode, to meet the spirit of his father, at eleven o'clock that night. He attended also to this summons, but when there, he began to consider the lateness of the hour, and that he would be unable to return to his lodgings, and must pass the night upon the heath; and the voice told him it was enough, and that he might return home.

At another time, he was told to read his Bible, to go to church, and to be more attentive to religious duties, and he was so for a short time only; for this effect soon passed away.

On a late occasion, he again heard the voice as from heaven, assuring him *that his sins were forgiven*; and indeed it has pleased God of his infinite mercy, to effect (by means of affliction) a most happy change in his life and conversation; his views are well defined; and his motives and conduct are irreproachable, while his only hope for safety is in Christ.

X. Y. Z. now became a most diligent student of the Bible, and considers that he every where finds proofs in support of *his* manner of accounting for these impressions. He often hears the voices of deceased relatives and friends, and recognizes them by the sound. He constantly hears his own thoughts repeated by voices in the air. Upon the whole, these voices have exerted a beneficial influence upon him, and have generally told him to do what is right, and to avoid what is wrong. But this has not always been the case : and there seem to him to be two kinds of voices, and that these are opposed to each other ; the one teaching him to do what is right, the other assailing him by contradictions, and by the most horrid imprecations ; so that he conceives himself to be the subject of contention between good and evil spirits, for the mastery over him ; and in confirmation of this view, he appeals to the change wrought in him, as evidence of the supreme power of Christ. These voices sometimes proceed from the air, sometimes from one part of the room, sometimes from another, and sometimes from his own body. The air he inhales appears to convey a sound, and to impress audibly, but to this there are no rational words attached. When he is inclined to do

wrong, the good voice seems to warn him, and to become troublesome; and on the other hand, there is an expression of conscious satisfaction from well-doing. On one occasion, the voice exhorted him to persevere in the Christian course; the opposing voice advised him to hang himself: sometimes a sustained dialogue will be kept up for a considerable time, and the thoughts which are suggested appear to him to be the *production of another, not his own*. At some periods, the opposing voice is very onerous and oppressive to him, and he becomes *irritable and disposed to quarrel with it*; and when this has been the case, he invariably suffers for it, and *the voice becomes more troublesome*.

Moreover, X. Y. Z. often sees an appearance in the air, as of a great number of *eyes*, and evidently contemplates these as *ministering spirits*. Some little time since, he was directed to visit a gentleman, and to inform him that his father's spirit had warned him to acquaint his son, that the millennium had commenced, and to exhort him to be religious. Again, he sleeps well for some hours on first retiring to rest, and is not disturbed; but when he awakens he hears the voices, which render him uneasy till he rises. There ap-

pears to be a kind of dissatisfaction on the part of these attendant voices, unless he gets up ; and this has made him an early riser.

Finally, this patient, of whom only a very feeble outline has been sketched, has remarked that he hears voices more when his health is disordered, and that they are more troublesome during an electrical state of the atmosphere ; facts which he has noticed notwithstanding his own belief of the theological nature of his case. I must make a few remarks on this interesting case ; and shall notice,

First, its physical origin ;

Secondly, its happy influence upon the character ; and,

Thirdly, distinguish between this state, and any instance of recorded analogous conversion.

1. The physical origin of this state is shown by a consideration of its circumstances.

In its *commencement*, there had been no antecedent religious impression ; but, on the contrary, continued and distracting anxiety arising from mental causes of a sinful complexion. This solicitude had pressed upon his bosom, and had produced irritation of the nervous system to such an extent as to undermine the general health. *Then, and not till then*, he was awakened from *sleep (not impressed while awake)* ;

during which state there naturally occurs a certain degree of congestion in the vessels of the brain, increased of necessity in the present instance by the preceding irritation of that organ, with the sound of voices, and a sustained conversation relating to himself, and to the situation on which he was placed. These proceeded apparently from the next house; and he proved at once, so far as proof could be obtained, that they were *sensorial illusions*. In this state of the brain, however, when it has escaped the controul of the presiding spirit, the mind is not capable of *fixing even upon demonstration*, and therefore returns to its own morbid trains.

The same state of cerebral irritation continuing, he himself became the object of these threatening voices; he was afraid of returning home; *his head felt as if on fire*; and in this state of brainular excitation he wandered into the country, and into the fields, without any other object than to escape from this imaginary destruction. He returned to town after a day or two; and the same morbid action continuing, another illusion (first also occurring during the *night*) occupied his attention, accompanied by the same eager, impulsive, characteristic desire to secure his friend's escape from the

threatened calamity. At this period of his history, he was placed under medical supervision; and by great quiet, cupping, and medicine, this attack subsided in a few days. Up to this time no particular turn had been given to his views, and there is no room for supposing supernatural agency.

The *same causes* of cerebral irritation still existing, and the *health having again become more disordered*, his malady assumed a new feature. The same kind of irresistible impulse still attended his actions; but his views and feelings now began to put on a religious character,—yet with the same marked disturbance of the brain and its functions; witness the occurrences at ———, and on the heath.

He hears the voices of *deceased* friends, and *recognises* them by their *sound*, showing at once the influence of a *recollected impression*, and also proving the existence of a *physical state* of brainular excitation. Again; he *hears* his own thoughts repeated by *voices in the air*, showing once more the presence of *sensorial illusion*. These voices sometimes proceed from different parts of a room; sometimes from the air; and at others from his own body: thus attaching physical attributes to the supposed spiritual

agency, and again proclaiming *sensorial illusion*. A modification of this same state, unattended by articulate sounds, and arising from the atmosphere as it is inhaled, still further elucidates the morbid susceptibility to *sensation* of the nervous system. When he becomes irritable and disposed to quarrel with this troublesome voice, that is, whenever the brain is additionally excited, the voices become more troublesome. Again; he occasionally sees an appearance as of a great number of eyes in the sky, supposing these to be ministering spirits; thus retaining a physical form, but not requiring their spiritual agency. Farther; up to a very recent period, he was warned to visit a gentleman, and to inform him, by the desire of his father's spirit, that the millennial reign of Christ upon earth had commenced; thus showing a continuance of the original morbid trains, and of the same impulsive character; only that they are now modified by a mind deeply imbued with religious principles.

Lastly; he always hears the voices more when his health is more particularly disordered; or during the existence of a highly electrical state of the atmosphere.

Only let these circumstances be duly con-

sidered, and surely none will doubt the physical origin of these voices ; but should they do so let them attend,

Secondly, to the happy influence of this state upon the heart, and upon the character. By what means was this effected ?

These circumstances of fearful impression induced him to pause, and to consider, to look back on his past life, and forward to futurity, and the broken law of God ; and to listen to the “ still small voice ” of heavenly wisdom. Thus it pleased God, through the influence of his sorrows, to awaken him to a sense of his lost and ruined state, and to enable him, by his Holy Spirit, to lay hold of the hope, set before him in the Gospel, of a crucified Saviour. But the physical disordered manifestation still continuing, his impression of forgiveness arose, not so much from the *believing sense* of an interest in the atoning sacrifice of Christ, as from having heard it proclaimed from heaven *that his sins were forgiven*. He had become the subject of the converting grace of God ; he *really believed* in Christ ; felt that he was healed of the plague of sin ; and this feeling was repeated in common with almost all his thoughts by a voice from heaven. From this time a real change of heart and life had taken place ; and he now

read his Bible diligently, and became, it is trusted, a new man in Christ Jesus, renewed by the Spirit of his grace.

Upon the whole, these voices have been beneficial to him ; but this has not always been the case. Here, again, he who has begun a good work, will carry it on until the day of the Lord Jesus ; but the influence of remaining corruption, acting also upon a state of cerebral irritation, has tempted him to forget God, and to commit sin ; and the Christian's struggle between the influence of better principles implanted, and of evil principles not yet subdued, has been going on : only that his morbid physical state has induced him to ascribe this to peculiar spiritual agency, rather than to the ordinary operations of the Spirit of God, in the heart of a sinner awakened, convinced, pardoned, but still imperfect.

The approbation or reproof of an enlightened conscience will sufficiently explain the uneasy feelings produced by listening to the temptation to do wrong ; and the strength obtained for time to come by the successful wish and effort to do right, and to imitate the Saviour.

Thirdly ; it remains to show the distinctive characters of this state, and a recorded instance of miraculous conversion, lest some fearful

Christian might suppose that that change upon St. Paul might be referred also to physical causes, and thus might be produced an apprehension lest the records of Scripture should be impugned. But the conversion of St. Paul was *miraculous*. He was a chosen vessel unto God, to bear his name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the people of Israel ; therefore the persecutor was arrested in his maddening course by a voice from heaven, “Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me ?” And the effect was worthy such an immediate interference of the all-powerful Creator ; for he, trembling and astonished, stood a monument of the power of Divine grace, converted from the error of his way, and exclaiming, in the language of penitent and believing supplication, “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do ?” And the result of this miracle was, that “straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God.”

How essentially different in all its circumstances and effects are the two events ! In the first place, though the conversion of a sinner is at all times a miracle of Divine grace, the age of *miraculous conversion* has passed by ; it is no longer required ; the ordinary operations of the Spirit of God, by his word, by his ordinances, and by his providential arrangements, have su-

perseded the extraordinary operations of the early ages of the history of the church of Christ; just as the ordinary ministers of the Gospel have taken the place of the extraordinary ministers of the apostolic age. Such a deviation from the ordinary course of God's moral government is no longer required; and therefore an occasion for such interference has not been established.

- But the objects of the alleged similar cases were totally different; in the instance of St. Paul, there was an *immediate, but rational*, appeal to the conscience of the persecutor, and a conviction of sin, and a humble dependance upon Divine grace as its consequence. In the case now mentioned, there is no such rational conviction of sin, no revelation of an offended God reconciled to rebellious man in the person of Christ; no exhibition of the sacrifice of the Saviour; no invitation to look unto him and be saved; but a barren intimation that the millennial reign of Christ upon earth *had commenced*, instead of the application of the atoning blood of Christ to the heart; a communication that *there* the city of redemption would be built, instead of leading the sinner to the only city of refuge, and bringing him to seek for the pardon of his sins, and the comfort of the Holy Spirit.

Not only, therefore, is this narrative deficient in those attributes which would constitute it a divine agency, but it possesses evidences which take it for ever from such a supposition. In the first place, it wants the holy character of *immutable truth*; for however we may have the happiness of living in the latter days of the Christian church, yet, without entering upon the question of the precise nature of the millennial glory of Christ, it may be safely said, that it *has not* commenced. Moreover the localization of the “city of redemption,” the new Jerusalem, is another evidence of this want of truth; and a proof that the supposed revelation could not have been given by the God of Truth.

That it was entirely a physical state is shown, in the first place, by this perversion of religious truth; by the preceding state of ill health; by *the forms of happy spirits* which were seen on this occasion, and which proved the brain to be in that state of peculiar excitation in which apparitions are seen; and by the subsequent delusive occurrences on the heath.

Once more: that this could not claim a divine origin; and consequently, that it has no claim for comparison with the miraculous conversion of St. Paul, is shown by the effects

which followed, as well as by those which were wanting.

The effects which followed were, indiscriminate charity, and the interview with his father's spirit. Now charity is a very proper evidence of love to God, but then it must be as a fruit of faith: and it will select its objects, so as to relieve misery and promote the glory of God; not add to that desecration of his sacred name and holy laws, which must arise from indiscriminate almsgiving to a multitude collected by the *strangeness of manner* of the patient. Here is the impulsive action of physical irritation—not the humble seeking of the glory of Christ by the new convert; he was beginning with the evidence rather than with the principle.

But again; he was warned to meet the spirit of his father on the heath: and here, probably from diminished cerebral irritation, arising from fatigue, and still more perhaps from the impression of cold air, he began to consider the lateness of the hour, &c.; and then was told, that it was enough, and that he might return home; that is, he considered this in his own mind, and then, by the physical delusion which has followed him ever since, his own thoughts were repeated to him from the clouds,

and, as he verily then believed, were revealed to him.

But the effects which should have followed, and which were wanting, prove that it was not a special exertion of divine power. It was *not* followed by the conversion of the sinner; for, however this change occurred afterwards, under the ordinary teaching of the Divine Spirit, and in the use of the ordinary means of grace, it did not result at that time from this supposed extraordinary revelation: so that, if it were allowed to be miraculous, the miracle would have been produced without a corresponding result; the exertion of divine power would have been in vain;—a result so utterly inconsistent with reason and revelation, that we may safely deny the premises which lead to it.

And lastly: at another time, subsequent to this, he was told to read his Bible, to go to church, and to be more attentive to religious duties—all which he did for a short time only; for this influence soon passed away, and he remained indifferent, till really called by Him who is mighty to save, and made willing in the day of His power.

How earnestly, therefore, should the Christian

strive against every physical and moral cause which might occasion this perversion; and what a source of consolation should it be to him under the impression of infirmities, against which he daily and continually struggles, that our omniscient Judge and Saviour knows our frame, and is touched with the feeling of our infirmities; remaining always, under every changing scene, the same unchangeable God; "faithful to save," almighty to rule and command! "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted (tried) like as we are, yet without sin. Let us, therefore, come boldly unto the Throne of Grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in every time of need."

But we proceed to state, that the histories of apparitions may be accounted for on the principle of cerebral irritation arising from a morbid impression, primarily made either upon the *mind* or the *body*.

First, upon the *mind*.—Some may be traced to the influence of any dogma of superstitious belief impressed upon the mental organ in early childhood, and recalled in after life, under circumstances of cerebral excitation, with an

unwonted and unnatural degree of vividness. It is probable that the recollection of an impression is proportioned to its pristine intensity; to the attention which it receives at the time, and to the manifold feelings with which it is subsequently associated. And if so, *first impressions* are of the greatest consequence, because their intensity is proportioned to their novelty and freshness: they receive an undivided attention; and they operate upon a mind unbiassed by prejudice, unsophisticated by the cold and selfish calculations of after-life, and at a time when mental manifestation is characterized by the desire of *sensation* and by a craving after *excitement*.

Granting this to be the case, the impressions of early childhood are of the first consequence: because, although many years may have elapsed since they were first made, and although afterwards they may have apparently faded from memory; still they will be revived by some accidental association, and with all the energy of first feeling: so that they will have acquired a power over the judgment and the will, which will stimulate these faculties to action, render them unsafe guides to conduct, and prepare them for the influence of morbid trains of

thought, and for the creation of unreal images of terror.

Besides, it is the nature of the organ upon which these impressions are made, that they do not weaken by the lapse of time, and by the common effect of distance in diminishing influence; but that they re-appear with pristine vigour, perhaps even with augmented power, however long may have been the interval: and therefore it is that the brain does not supersede the effects of early over-excitement.

A little friend of mine, not at all remarkable for timidity of character, passes the commencement of his nights in sleepless horror, from a morbid disposition to the production of unreal images. It is also remarked, that this horror is greatly influenced by the character of his reading during the preceding day. When this has been powerfully excitant, especially if it has been some interesting fiction, the tendency is increased, and for the plainest reason:—the mind has been engaged upon the absolute creation of unreal images, and has been over-excited; all goes on tolerably well, so long as the courage imparted by society, action, daylight, and employment, operate in sustaining the mind; but when these are abstracted, name-

less fear predominates : and although he retires to bed with the resolution of a hero, physical irritability, terror, and cowardice, soon vanquish a better principle ; and the result is, that the phantoms of brainular creation drive him from his pillow to the day-nursery, and to the protection of his attendants. And this is not a singular instance, even within my own moderately extensive observation.

Who is there that has not listened with intense interest to fairy tales—to tales of the genii—enchanted castles—supernatural aid—or the history of giants,—till he has expected to find a ghost at his elbow, and has been afraid to look behind him, from the apprehension of some unearthly visitant ; till he has trembled at his shadow, or the sound of his own motions ? Who is there that will not confess to have experienced the excessive excitement of works of fiction,—delighted, perhaps, in the interest produced,—an interest amounting to palpitation and breathless anxiety for some imaginary distress ? and yet who has not traced that the effect of this excitement was to *unnerve* him ? to predispose him to entertain and to create situations of danger, and to people them with imaginary beings, of unknown agency, and immense though undefined power ? Let this

operate as a warning against the indulgence of an excessive and unhallowed taste for reading of this description.

Fiction in general, nay, even *religious fiction*, produces this effect upon the mind in the early habit of creating imaginary personages. This impression and its consequent habit, will never be lost; but in after-life, under favourable circumstances, will be recalled, and will form one basis for the belief in apparitions.—A friend of mine, very lately, and during the early stages of the important discussion which has just so happily closed on the subject of Catholic concession, told me, that he had seen a lady in an *agony of terror*, which had caused many sleepless hours,—not arising from a consideration of the really fearful points of the question, but from an *actual injury inflicted upon the sensorium* in early life, by a sight of the terrible pictures in the Book of Martyrs; the recollection of which, with all its associated horrors, was ready to be called up afresh upon the first application of any exciting cause. This law is sufficiently well known; and did we need a proof of this assertion—the exhibition of a transparency setting forth the burning of Bishop Latimer, during a recent memorable electioneering contest, would be

sufficient to show that this power of awakening terrific images, after the days of childhood had passed by, had not been overlooked by those who had an object, doubtless in their view a laudable one, to accomplish.

CHAPTER XV.

Influence of brainular disease on the function of volition :— appearance of departed spirits to distant friends ;—other supernatural appearances ;—various illustrative cases.

I PROCEED to notice cerebral irritation arising from *bodily* causes, as another source of spectral appearances.

But before I advance further on the subject, it will be desirable to mention two or three instances of disordered mental manifestation, particularly impairing the energy of the function of *volition*, and depending upon physical causes.

A. B. possessed by inheritance what is called a highly *nervous* or *sensitive constitution*, that is, a system in which *susceptibility to impression* largely predominates. For a moment let the meaning of these terms be enquired after. Do they mean that such was the nature

of the spiritual principle; or do they express some quality of the organ through which its manifestations are perceived? It is almost an offence against the common sense of my readers to ask the question, since the very terms employed, lead the attention to a bodily origin. Upon a mental and corporeal system thus constituted, causes of anxiety, distress, and disappointment began to operate, and to supply a constant source of irritation; the bodily health gave way; prostration of strength and loss of energy of volition were the consequence, to such an extent as to amount, in the patient's own expressive terms, "almost to a change of nature"—the more painfully felt, because he is aware of the necessity and duty of exertion.

A. B. has been subject to a white, dry tongue in the morning—in fact, to the peculiar tongue of *cerebral* irritation, to unrefreshing sleep, and to a lassitude which unfitted him for any exertion for more than half the day; he dreams a great deal, and instead of awaking in peace, to a sense of activity, and to the immediate possession of all his powers and faculties, he is some time in shaking off unpleasant impressions, and teaching himself to look to the cheerful side of circumstances. The powers of digestion are feeble, and there

is often a peculiar craving, after taking food. Doubtless these symptoms result from the deficient supply of nervous energy to the stomach; but if we took the other view of the subject, and considered the stomach as the *first* link in the chain of irritation, we should still arrive intermediately at the same physical origin of the disordered mental manifestation. It is to be remarked also, that the disorder of stomach is always in proportion to the call for *mental exertion*.

The indications in the case of A. B. were to attend to the general health, improve the digestion, remove sources of irritation, find regular employment and exercise for body and mind, and strengthen the function of volition, so as to supersede that vacillation of the will, which has been so strongly marked in a constant changefulness of purpose. Sufficient time has not yet been given to ascertain how far this may be completely removable; but as far as the experiment has been tried, it has been attended by a flattering prospect of success. This case admirably illustrates the natural connexion between body and mind.

C. D. became the subject of a severe apoplectic seizure, which threatened his existence, but from which he slowly and difficultly re-

covered. During his tedious convalescence, he was affected with mental agitations of the most terrific kind; he was assailed by a variety of delusive images; he was haunted by the presence of individuals which produced agony of fear; and he frequently called upon his attendants to destroy him, or to furnish him with the means of destroying himself. He slowly regained his health of body and peace of mind; he is now, although feeble, as cheerful as is his natural character, and cherishes existence with the care of one who is sensible of the value of the boon.

An objector will perhaps say, here was a case of *violent disease* which will abundantly account for the disordered manifestations of mind. Yet if it be allowed, that in this instance disordered manifestations of mind are to be accounted for by the existence of cerebral disease, *what perversion of reasoning* can interfere with the conclusion, that other morbid brainular states, of a less violent character, may destroy the integrity and harmony of mental operation? *Surely none, which does not itself originate in disease!* If it be granted that cerebral disease *does ever* produce disordered mental manifestations, nothing can supersede the conclusion that it *may do so always*; al-

though man remains minutely responsible for his conduct, because *the brain is the servant of the spiritual principle*, until disease has advanced so far as to obliterate the power of reason and volition ; and then insanity is produced.

Once more : E. F. has been subjected to great alternations of high spirits, or of hypochondriasis ; and the latter state has been always accompanied with more or less disorder of the general system. He has a prescriptive title to cerebral excitement ; and his talents have placed him in a rank of literary eminence. During the period of depression, so different was the aspect of circumstances, that he could not believe they were the same as they appeared to be, when the dark clouds were rolled away and the influence of cerebral irritation had subsided. He finds that beyond a certain point he is not master of himself ; he dares not often trust himself to express merited displeasure, lest he should become angry—pass the point at which he ceases to controul his actions and expressions, and should be betrayed into a violence which he would afterwards deplore. This *has* happened to him ; and a disposition the most humane, mild, and benevolent, *has* been goaded, in one of these paroxysms, into acts the most abhorrent to

his reason, judgment, and conscience ; and from reflection upon which he has cruelly suffered. Under physical treatment conducted upon the principles assumed in this essay, he has soon regained the *entire command over himself*.

To resume the thread of my essay ; it has already been shown that the brain is the organ of the mind ; and that under certain circumstances of irritation it is liable to disordered manifestations, so as to occasion various illusions, and among others the appearance of ghosts, and other alleged supernatural visitations. My present position is, that under given circumstances the brain ceases to be a perfect organ for mental manifestation ; and that in this state of imperfection it continues to act on without the guidance of the presiding mind, and so as to give rise to various appearances, which have usually been attributed to supernatural agency.

Perhaps the most important of these cases are those, first, in which there has been supposed to be the re-appearance of departed spirits to distant friends, at the moment of the dissolution of the connexion of mind with its material tenement ; and, secondly, those which have been ascribed to the immediate intervention of the Deity.

Of the former class, it seems just to infer that *one* established case in which the supposed circumstances have taken place, but the death of the party has *not* occurred, will be sufficient to overturn the hypothesis; because, if intended by the Divine Power as a notice or warning of the death of certain individuals, and therefore permitted or appointed by that Providence, it must be invariable, or it cannot form a portion of the moral government of a Being of infinite and immutable truth. Such a history is furnished us in the narrative of the Rev. Joseph Wilkins, published in the *Record* of September 2, 1828. [Having mislaid the paper, I quote from memory, but I believe correctly.] It is there stated, that Mr. Wilkins dreamed that he paid a visit to his family at Abingdon; that he arrived in the night, and tried to obtain an entrance at the front door, but in vain; that he then went round to the back door, and, finding it open, proceeded up stairs to his mother's chamber, and addressed her; after this he awoke, and perhaps would not have thought a second time about his dream, but that on the same night, and at the same hour, Mrs. Wilkins, his mother, was awakened by some person endeavouring to obtain an entrance at the street-door, but failing in doing so, she heard pre-

sently afterwards the back-door opened; her son came up stairs and addressed her in the words before alluded to. So thoroughly convinced was she that this was the usual supposed appearance of departed spirits to their distant friends, that a letter was written the very next day to a friend of the Rev. Joseph Wilkins, upon the presumption that he was dead, to inquire particulars. The individual who publishes this statement concludes by observing, that it *may appear strange* that the narrator lived half a century after this circumstance, and “could never attribute any thing that happened, which could apply to this plain and simple matter of fact.”—*Strange indeed, surpassing strange*, it would have been, if viewed as a *spiritual* communication; but an *extraordinary coincidence* only, if considered as resulting from a state of cerebral irritation, existing in two individuals of the same family, with similar constitutional predispositions, at the same time. The fact, I am not disposed to deny, may have happened; its circumstances may not be easy to explain: one thing, however, is certain—namely, that the supposition of coincident cerebral irritation *is possible*; while that of a heavenly agency, to produce a false impression, painful and useless, upon the mind, is untenable,

may, impossible. And if the inference from a single instance of well-authenticated fact can be thus proved to be false, the usual consequence is subverted; and then, the essential character of the Divine proceeding being wanting—namely, *truth and immutability*—the effect cannot be ascribed to *an Almighty agency*. The position that such assumed appearances may be ascribed to the evil spirit is equally untenable, because it would be wanting in that character of malignity, and that perversion of good, which must attach to demoniacal influence.

The present seems to be a fit opportunity for mentioning what has happened to G. H. a lady, who many years since thought she saw the children of a friend of her's, at some distance, in the grounds, in *deep mourning*, and concluded that this was a warning of the decease of her friend; but no such consequence followed. At another time, this same lady saw her own coachman pass through her room dressed in the usual habiliments of woe, and her thoughts turned anxiously to her husband, whose health was at that time precarious; but no occasion for mourning happened in the family. This lady, it is true, was not carried away by these appearances; but had they happened to a person of a different mental

calibre, they would have been viewed as mournful presages, and would have been considered as apparitions.

It is not many weeks since one of my patients, who believed herself dying, and who was in fact at that time in a very precarious state, accosted me at my evening visit with the inquiry,—“Is your dear little boy gone to heaven?” The little creature, to whom this question applied, had been most dangerously ill, but was recovering, and I therefore stated he was *better*. “*Are you* (with great emphasis) *quite sure of that?*” “Yes.” —“How long is it since you saw him?” “Six or seven hours.”—“Well, I cannot help thinking that he is gone, for he *has been brought to me this evening*; but *he said he could not wait for me, and fluttered his wings, and disappeared.*” It is perhaps needless to remark, that this little patient has convalesced. The value of the narrative consists in the complete illusion which was thus produced, during a highly-excited state of the nervous system; inducing so firm a belief, that it could not be superseded at the time. If the death of the little boy *had* taken place at that period, coincidence would have offered a sufficient ground of explanation: but by all believers in apparitions, it would have been quoted in proof of the reality of appearance of *those just*

dead, to others who are living. As it really is, it affords a beautiful illustration of the physical origin of these morbid manifestations of mind.

But, secondly, the history of Colonel Gardiner affords an example of our second division ; and, indeed, it is perhaps one of the most extraordinary upon record. The circumstances are too well known to require recapitulation. Yet let it be recollected, that the impression resulting from this circumstance, however beneficial to the party, was immediately attended by a most powerful influence upon the nervous system, and was followed by very severe illness ; and, according to the views maintained in this Essay, was produced by the approach of that malady, through a peculiar, but not uncommon, agency, exerted upon the brainular system during the incubation of disease.

That the brain is liable to illusory excitement under such circumstances, is shown by the well-known fact of the fallacious feeling of high health, and comfort, and hilarity, which often precedes, scarcely by an interval of five minutes, all the miserable sensations of indigestion, acidity, heart-burn, sinking, and wretchedness, which accompany certain states of disordered function of the stomach. Now, if this acknowledged illusion be dependent

upon a slight disturbance of the general harmony of the system, can it be deemed extraordinary that the approach of its more serious and threatening invasions should be attended by more important illusions, and more deeply shadowed creations of a morbid brain ?

To this view of the subject it may be replied, that in the instance of Colonel Gardiner it was followed by the conversion of a sinner, and that therefore it must have owned a supernatural origin. But this is by no means a consecutive result, and cannot be admitted in the argument. For it is perfectly possible, and consistent with all we know of the mysterious wisdom and goodness of a God of order and of infinite mercy, who works by the agency of means, that this sickness, and the effect produced upon the nervous system by its approach, should be employed as the *very means* of arresting the sinner in his headlong course of vice and widening alienation from God, and of recalling him to better thoughts and principles ; awakening him to repentance, to a sense of his lost and ruined state, and to the only hope of salvation, through the atoning sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ, the only refuge for the convinced unpardoned sinner, the only means of obtaining peace.

In the order of God's providence, nothing is

more usual than that affliction, and especially sickness, should be employed to accomplish spiritual good, even the purposes of Divine mercy towards the sufferers; for we well know how greatly the heart is softened and rendered impressible by sorrow. Sometimes even wicked men are permitted, unintentionally on their parts, to bring about these designs; at other times, we become ourselves the authors of our misfortunes, by our imprudence, or neglect, or vices.

God is not the author of evil, and does not employ evil in his service. But the *wicked* agents of their *own desires* and devices are permitted, in following their *own wills*, to bring about the designs of the Almighty. So, also, impressions upon the nervous system, which result from a physical influence, as well as the calamity of insanity itself, may be overruled for good, and may be instrumental to the conviction and conversion of the sinner. And although it is desirable for us to form just views of these cases, it might not always be advisable to combat opinions of this kind, where we found them referred to a supernatural agency; provided always, that we could trace their *holy influence* upon the heart and conduct of those who verily thought they owed their "*second thoughts*" to some such special miracle. The

feverish heat of enthusiasm is certainly not to be desired, but it is infinitely less to be deprecated than the torpor of unbelief; that gloomy collapse of action which scarcely admits of hope. Still, enthusiasm is an evil, which admits of prevention rather than cure; and the first of these objects forms the great purpose of the present Essay.

How delightful is the reflection, that all our affairs are in the hands of such an omnipotent and all-wise Jehovah, whose merciful designs cannot be circumvented, and who deigns to overrule for good even the wicked devices of his rebellious creatures. Without, therefore, the necessity of supposing any supernatural influence, we have a most rational explanation of this mystery—one which enlarges our views, and fixes them upon the infinite goodness of the Almighty, who doth all things well; instead of upon a very questionable agency, which has often been perverted to bad purposes.

Besides, a similar appearance has been often made without being followed by a similar result. And if the Almighty should have condescended to employ this extraordinary revelation in bringing about his designs of mercy, it can scarcely be supposed that this can ever have occurred without being followed by the alleged consequence. For however, under

common circumstances, the sinner, in the hardness of his heart, may resist the striving of the Spirit in all ordinary means of impression, it cannot be allowed that this would be the case when a miracle—that is, an interference with the customary laws of nature—had been produced for this express purpose; for the Omnipotent does nothing in vain. Now two cases, very nearly similar to that of Colonel Gardiner, have occurred in the experience of the writer of these remarks, and the supposed consequences have not taken place. They were the following:—

A farmer, in returning from market, was deeply affected by a most extraordinary brilliant light, which he thought he saw upon the road, and by an appearance in that light, which he conceived to be our Saviour. He was greatly alarmed, and spurring his horse, galloped home; remained agitated during the evening; was seized with typhus fever, then prevailing in the neighbourhood; and died in about ten days. Be it observed, that on the morning of the day of the supposed vision, he had complained, before he left home, of head-ache, languor, and general weariness. In fact, this is only to be accounted for, rationally, by supposing the existence of the nervous impression preceding the open attack of severe

disease. It would be well if we would sometimes borrow caution from a heathen; “*Nec Deus intersit, nisi dignus vindice nodus inciderit.*” An analogous case has been related to me, in which there was an appearance of the *evil one*, and which was followed by severe illness and death; but as this has not happened within the sphere of my own investigation, it is merely mentioned as showing the frequency of such impressions.

Another instance, but which was not followed by a fatal result, occurred in the case of I. K., who has several times witnessed a luminous appearance, only without a visible representation of any particular form. This has happened almost immediately after going to bed; and although the individual may be said to be free from superstitious fears, and religion cannot bear the unjust blame of inducing them, for he is hesitating on the subject of some of the grand truths of Christianity; yet it has been difficult, nay, impossible, to convince him that the light was not real; and that the apparent vividness with which he saw every surrounding object, although he was really in the dark, was the actual result of recollected impressions previously made upon the sensorium, and now associated with the ocular spectrum produced by a peculiar state of the

optic nerve ; that condition being the result of disordered health, since upon all these occasions the general health has been manifestly deranged.

Again : L. M. is a young gentleman, who had for years been subject to paroxysms of epilepsy, and, I apprehend too, of maniacal hallucination. His history, so far as it fell under my own observation, is shortly this. He came into my neighbourhood for change of air. He had been one day to visit a friend of his, residing in a village a few miles distant, and had left that house about eleven o'clock at night. He did not return to his lodgings until five the next morning, and then in a state of great exhaustion, with his clothes in so wet, and dirty, and disordered a condition, as indicated that he must have spent a considerable portion of the night upon the wild commons with which this locality is surrounded. Be it observed, that, on *account of his head*, he had taken only *one* glass of wine ; so that the excitement of intoxication is entirely out of the question. His account of himself was, that he had been met by a light of the most extraordinary brilliance, in the centre of which was a female form of exceeding beauty ; and that he had followed this light, until, when it finally disappeared, he found himself completely bewildered, and knew not where he

was. He then wandered about, until at length he came to a cottage, and there remained, till with the assistance of day-light and of the cottagers, he found his way home.

Two days after this occurrence, I was summoned in the night to see him, on account of an extraordinary state of insensibility in which he appeared to be, and of the impossibility of his friends getting him to bed. I found him in a paroxysm of ecstasy, with his Bible in his hands, opened, and too firmly grasped to be relinquished without the use of great violence; his eyes fixed on a particular part of the room, with the utmost intensity of eager desire; his lips quivering in imaginary conversation; his feet cold, though it was a very hot night; and the head greatly heated with an accelerated and excited circulation through its vessels. This state was only the precursor of a regular attack of insanity, which gave way, after a few days, to cupping, leeches, blistering, cold applications to the head, mustard plasters to the feet, the usual medicines, and rational treatment of a mental and moral complexion. And what do these circumstances prove, if they do not show that these supposed supernatural appearances are the result of disordered action of the brainular system, arising for the most part from the incubation of disease? At least,

we have traced back several instances of the kind to this peculiar condition of the nervous system; and it becomes the objector to show why we may not argue from circumstances which we *can* fathom, to analogous circumstances, which are beyond the reach of our bounded vision, but which admit of easy explanation upon this principle, while on any other hypothesis they are wholly and entirely inexplicable.

It is related, in the Memoirs of Pastor Oberlin, that there appeared nightly to the family of one of his parishioners the ghost of an ancient knight, who gave information of a treasure hidden in the cellar. Pastor Oberlin was called in his ministerial capacity to witness this appearance. It is needless to add, that he could see nothing: but he very wisely addressed the supposed apparition in a commanding tone, desiring it to delude these poor people no longer; and most prudently introduced into his address the only legitimate means of acquiring riches, by persevering industry. The nocturnal visitor never again appeared; clearly showing that his pastoral influence was enough to supersede the morbid hallucination which had been produced upon several brains, by the agency of that community of feeling and interest which exists

between the different branches of the same family.

A young man, within the circle of my acquaintance, was severely ill, and suffered large loss of blood. This was succeeded by irregularity in the distribution of that fluid, and the head got an undue proportion; the consequence of which was an excited state of the brain, and what he termed a happiness on religious subjects, which rendered him full of gratitude and hope. This was followed, in a day or two, by his assertion that he had had an extraordinary revelation from God, in which he was called by name in an audible voice, and had received a commission to teach and preach by every means: in fact, a paroxysm of insanity had set in. He burst into a rhapsodical, incoherent prayer; laid his hands on a little girl, and blessed her, as in the character of our Saviour. The instant the Bible is mentioned, he asserts that he no longer needs it, because he has received a special revelation, which supersedes its necessity;—in itself an abundant proof of the patient's delusion, and showing, on the whole, the influence of physical causes in disturbing the manifestations of mind. This patient is just dismissed convalescent from a private lunatic asylum.

CHAPTER XVI.

The same subject continued.—Examination of some popular histories of supernatural visitation;—Lord Tyrone and Lady Beresford;—Lord Lyttleton, &c. &c.

IN the prosecution of our argument, we now advance a step further, and we assert, that if these supernatural appearances be considered as the commissioned agents of the Omnipotent to convince the hardened heart, it is quite impossible to resist the conclusion that the same agency has been employed as a weapon against the spread of true religion in the world. But it is impossible to allow that any portion of God's providential arrangements can be directly opposed to his most holy will: therefore an event can never have occurred which would involve this solecism: consequently the apparition cannot be traced to spiritual agency, without involving a tremendous absurdity;

whereas, if it be considered as of bodily origin, though its consequences may have been such as, in the hands of a God of infinite grace, to be sometimes rendered the means of stopping the sinner in his maddening career, all is comprehensible, all is in keeping with the revealed and ordinary methods of God's providence.

The instance to which I particularly allude, is that of the well-known Lord Herbert of Cherbury, who, while meditating the publication of his work. "*De Veritate, prout distinguitur a Revelatione verisimili, possibili, et a falso;*" and, indeed, while hesitating as to the propriety of publishing, what he knew would attach some considerable odium to its author, prayed thus: "O thou eternal God, Author of the light which now shines upon me, and Giver of all inward illuminations, I do beseech thee, of thy infinite goodness, to pardon a greater request than a sinner ought to make. I am not satisfied enough, whether I shall publish this book, *De Veritate*: if it be for thy glory, I beseech thee give me some sign from heaven; if not, I shall suppress it." He had no sooner spoken these words, than a loud, though gentle, noise came from the heavens; which so comforted and supported him, that he took his petition

as granted, considered that he had the sign asked for, and resolved to print the work in question. Now, it is quite impossible to gainsay this fact, since it rests on the same basis with others of similar pretensions, though of an opposite cast of character—namely, *human testimony*, which, if admitted as evidence in the one case, must also be allowed in the other.

It may indeed be said, that God *overrules* all things for the promotion of his kingdom in the world; and therefore, that, as every event redounds to his glory, this was among the number. But it cannot be supposed that the Almighty would actually commission an enemy to the cause of truth to make an attack upon that cause (which would ultimately triumph,) for the purpose of obtaining a refutation; although he may have made the devices of man's froward heart contribute, by His power, to some real and substantial good, and to the setting forth of his glory.

If, then, we separate these results in any one instance from the immediate agency of God's providence, so do we legitimately in others: we estimate them aright; we refer them to a peculiar state of morbid cerebral irritation; and the individual so acting is to be considered as

entirely under a bodily influence, however he may be deceived into a contrary opinion, by feeling, prejudice, ignorance, or passion.

We have next to notice more particularly the appearance of individuals to others, and especially of the dead or dying to their distant friends.

We shall observe, that these appearances occur in a disordered state of the brainular system arising from bodily disease, or in the particular condition of that organ which results from intense mental excitement. In either case, there will be remarked a *peculiar susceptibility* to impression of every kind, and a predisposition towards the indulgence of emotions of a painful character. But this is a morbid state, not of the immaterial, indestructible spirit, but of the organ through which its manifestations of action are made, by which its perceptions are received, and its impressions are conveyed. This may exist in a greater or less degree, as will be best illustrated by the history of some cases which have fallen under my own observation.

A. B. had been blind for some years before she discovered that she was constantly surrounded by many bright and spiritual beings. She acknowledged they were inoffensive, but

their constant presence became troublesome. It was useless to reason with her: her constant appeal from the force of every argument employed was to *demonstration*: "*See, sir; there they are.*" No defined purpose for their appearance was ever ascertained.—In this case, there was chronic disease of the brain, which ultimately proved fatal, through the lengthened shadows of declining reason, the gradually deepening gloom of mental imbecility, to the total extinction of that light which mental manifestation sheds upon the pathway of mortality. Here, therefore, we have one instance of supposed spiritual appearance distinctly traced to disorder of the function of the brain.

C. D. became the subject of a severe attack of apoplexy, on recovering from which he had lost the power of recollecting the names, or even of distinguishing the different individuals, of which his family was composed: he would weep bitterly, or laugh heartily, without any adequate cause; would frequently address one part of his household for another; and would almost constantly hold imaginary conversations with some *spiritual* attendant, to whose agency he would attribute all his misdemeanors in diet, and all the deviations from the rules prescribed by his medical friend. So that here

again we have traced back an alleged spiritual agency to disease of the brain. The sequel of this history is instructive; for C. D. convalesced imperfectly; and in proportion as he did so, became more rational, and less frequently assailed by the visitation of his spiritual conductor, till the impression was entirely superseded by returning health and strength.

But there may be some excellent persons, who may fear lest, in thus referring supposed spiritual agency to a purely physical state, I may be undervaluing one of the most important doctrines of our holy religion—namely, *the influence of the sacred Spirit*. By no means: my only object is to vindicate this doctrine, and to separate it from those adventitious states with which it has no connexion, though it has too frequently been associated with them.

For a moment let the differences be considered. The office of the Holy Spirit is to lead us into truth; while the effect of this pseudo-spiritual agency is to leave us in the darkness of error. The Spirit of God operates upon our spirits through the medium of his word and ordinances: while these are generally lost sight of, or perhaps even opposed, by this supernatural influence. The teaching of the Spirit will lead us to follow Christ, and to strive to

be like him, with intense desire; while this physical state concentrates the thoughts and feelings upon selfish objects and pursuits, and abstracts them from the only satisfying good. The Holy Spirit is the comforter of the people of God; while this morbid state disturbs the peace, produces error, and surrounds its subject with the impenetrable gloom of disordered brainular function. The Spirit of grace exerts a holy, sanctifying influence upon the heart and conduct; while the alleged supernatural agency, to which it is opposed, more commonly leads the mind from that which is holy and just and good, and besets it with the fearfully morbid creations of a distempered fancy. The Spirit of God helpeth our infirmities; while this physical load increases their weight, augments their influence, diminishes the power of volition, and renders the Christian an easier prey to temptation, by taking away the natural safeguards which a gracious God has communicated in those faculties, which are talents, that, *well employed*, are capable of large augmentation.

Again: E. F. a clergyman of considerable talent and acquirements, had lived as an old fellow and private tutor in his college for many years, and had realized considerable property by these pursuits; but he sighed for independ-

ence, for absence from the duties and responsibilities of teaching, and for family comforts : he accordingly accepted the first good living that became vacant, and retired from his college, to the regret of all who knew him. Too soon, however, he found that he had acted indiscreetly ; and that, in fact, he had fled from peace. For the first month he established himself in his princely parsonage, and endeavoured to persuade himself that he was happy ; but happiness could not be found. Already his books ceased to interest him, and to beguile the many hours of his leisure ; he had not even spirits enough to unpack the cases which contained them. His parsonage required the temporary occupancy of some workmen, in order to render it exactly what he wished, and these harassed him by delays. Some difference of opinion arose with his parishioners on the subject of tithes ; and he found, or seemed to find, that he had actually given up income, and all the comforts of life without care, and with good society of his own literary habits, *for an excellent house which he could not enjoy ; for literary leisure which he had ceased to relish ; for domestic pleasures, which his present miserable state of mind forbade him to think of, on account of its injustice ; for the cares of a*

household; and for all the *annoyances attendant* upon an uncertain income, to be squeezed out of grudging farmers, who most unwillingly paid him their dues, and cheated him as often as they could do so with impunity. The black clouds of melancholy deepened around him; sleep, that common friend of the wretched, fled from his pillow, and was exchanged for brooding care and unvarying regret for the past, grief for the present, and despondency for the future. In this state (there existed family predisposition to insanity) the integrity of the brain gave way; he was haunted by visions of distress; the dread of poverty became a prominent idea; and the possessor of many hundreds a year in private property, in addition to a very valuable living, spoke of ruin as inevitable. He was assailed by the most painful suggestions, and was attended every where by one particular supernatural form, which day and night upbraided him as the author of his own misfortunes. On my representation, his aged diocesan granted him licence of non-residence, and after a time he was so far relieved as to enjoy life again. But a few years afterwards, mental causes of anxiety once more disturbed the equilibrium of the brainular function, and the same spiritual attendant was

again visible.—Thus, as I proceed in detailing the facts and observations out of which my own principles have grown, does the connexion between disorder of the brain, and supposed spiritual, supernatural appearances, become more clearly demonstrated.

G. H. was assailed by unearthly visitants, who used to choose the night for their appearance, and to awaken him by calling loudly his Christian name, and by bringing before him various accusations on the ground of his moral character. So deep was the conviction of the reality of these voices, and of the beings with which they were associated, that he could never tolerate a doubt of their existence, and became angry if the accuracy of the testimony of his senses was impugned. The manifestations of mind, at first only slightly disturbed, became more and more erroneous, till disease of the brain was prominent, under which he sank eventually.

But I proceed.—I. K., an intimate friend of my early years, and most happy in his domestic arrangements, lost his wife under the most painful circumstances, suddenly, just after she had apparently escaped from the dangers of an untoward confinement with her first child. Under these circumstances, it will easily be

believed that he laboured under considerable mental excitation, and consequent brainular irritation. A few weeks after this melancholy event, while travelling during the night on horseback, and in all probability thinking over his sorrows, and contrasting his present cheerless prospects with the joy which so lately gilded the hours of his happy home, the form of his lost relative appeared to be presented to him, at a little distance in advance: he stopped his horse, and contemplated the vision with great trepidation, till in a few seconds it vanished away. Within a few days of this appearance, while he was sitting in his solitary parlour late at night, reading by the light of a shaded taper, the door, he thought, opened, and again the form of his deceased partner entered; assured him of her complete happiness; conjured him to follow her footsteps; and added many points of the greatest individual interest, but of a nature too sacred to be submitted to public inspection. Now on both these occasions my friend assured me that he knew and felt that it was the peculiar state of his bodily system which had occasioned these apparitions. Particularly in the latter case, he doubts not that he had fallen asleep, and had been attacked by nightmare, from which he

awakened, springing up much agitated, and palpitating. That same night, however, impressed with the extraordinary nature of these circumstances, he committed them to paper; and they certainly afford a good illustration of the visionary irritation of the brain, when dependent upon the morbid influence of mental causes.

L. M., during the progress of fever, continually saw persons come to her room, and frequently rang her bell to have them shown to the door; or to have her children removed because they were a disturbance to her visitors. The endless forms of unusual beings which were presented to this patient, during the course of her malady, afford a convincing proof that irritation of the brain has the *power* of producing this state: and, if it be shown to possess the power, it is most illogical to deny its agency in the confection of the spiritual appearance, when no other cause can be given, attended with so few difficulties as the present.

Again; N. O. for a considerable period, saw the cross of our Saviour planted at a particular corner of her bed-room; and, although thoroughly incapable of reason, yet believed it was placed there for her comfort, on some inexplicable principle.

Lastly; P. Q. during a severe illness, repeatedly saw her father, residing at the distance of many hundred miles from her home, come to her bedside, and, withdrawing the curtain, address her in his usual voice and manner.

Instances of this kind might be indefinitely multiplied, from the writer's professional experience; but their accumulation is unnecessary; enough, surely, have been brought forward to establish the position, that disturbance of the cerebral system will occasion a peculiar condition of the brain, in which these apparitions are produced. In many of the foregoing cases supernatural visitations have been traced to this source, and Nicholai's ghosts were evidently of the same character; the result of nervous irritability, brought into action by the violent emotions which had preceded the attack. The author of the present Essay is not prepared to affirm that this is the case in *every* instance, and that there *can be* no spiritual appearance. But, granting its *possibility*, the question will then be,—If in *some cases* these supposed supernatural appearances are to be accounted for on *physical principles*, who is to deny that the same *origin may be applicable to all others?* Who is to decide as to *what is sensorial illusion*, and *what is spiritual and superna-*

tural agency? And then, is it not better, more rational, more Christian, to take up an hypothesis which *explains* many of the phenomena, and *reconciles* many difficulties, and *vindicates* the moral government of the Almighty, and is *supported* by the most powerful arguments and experience; than to adopt another mode of explanation which *assumes* every thing, but *defines* and *explains* nothing: which is involved in inextricable difficulty; which *throws a cloud* over the government of the Omnipotent; *which is opposed* to reason, and *is not sanctioned* by experience?

It now only remains for me to notice one or two of the most popular ghost stories, and to account for them upon the principles laid down in the preceding pages. And in the first place, the oft-cited history of the appearance of Lord Tyrone to Lady Beresford. The alleged facts of this case are as follow: an intimate friendship had subsisted between the parties, and they both entertained doubts on the subject of revealed religion. A mutual promise had been given, that whichever should die first, should, if permitted by the Almighty, appear to the survivor, in order to declare what religion was most acceptable to Him. Accordingly, Lady Beresford awakened one night and found

Lord Tyrone sitting by her bed-side; she screamed violently and endeavoured in vain to awaken Sir Marcus Beresford. Upon her inquiring of Lord Tyrone the cause of his appearance, he reminds her of their pledge, and informs her that he died at a certain period, and has been permitted to appear to her, in order to assure her of the truth of the revealed religion. He informs her of various circumstances which are to happen in her future life: and, finally, that she will die in child-bed in the forty-seventh year of her age. He further warns her, that, if she persists in her infidelity, her lot will be most miserable; but gives her reason to believe that *he* (who died in his infidel principles) is happy. Lady Beresford expresses her doubts as to the reality of Lord Tyrone's appearance, and her fears that in the morning she might be induced to ascribe it to the mere phantom of her imagination; and, moreover, states that she will not be convinced by the intelligence of Lord Tyrone's death, by his having thrown the curtain through a large iron hoop by which the tester of the bed was supported, by his handwriting in her pocket book—in fact, by nothing but by a *personal blemish* produced by *spiritual contact* with mortal flesh. “Now,” said he, “while you live let no mortal eye be-

hold that wrist; to see it would be sacrilege. He stopped—I turned to him again—he was gone!” It is added, that Lady Beresford ever afterwards wore a black band upon the injured wrist.

Now there can be no reasonable doubt that all this arose from a state of morbid cerebral excitement. The objections to the consistency of the narrative are, that Lady Beresford, upon discovering Lord Tyrone sitting by her bed-side, screamed out, and *endeavoured, but in vain*, to awaken Sir Marcus Beresford. This, then, was either that form of nightmare in which the patient seems to attempt the accomplishment of an object he most ardently desires, but ineffectually; or it involves the supposition that a most extraordinary sleep rested on Sir Marcus; thus requiring a further stretch of superstitious belief, and to no conceivable purpose; for if the appearance of Lord Tyrone *was permitted* by the Almighty in order to *convince* Lady Beresford of the *truth of the Christian revelation*; there would have been every rational motive why Sir Marcus should have been a party to this conviction, and no semblance of reason why the same beneficent Providence which vouchsafed a special communication to his Lady, should have withheld it from Sir Marcus. Which, I

would ask, of these two consequences is most consistent with truth; which may be most easily referred to the great maxim of a very prevalent superstition, “Credo, quia impossibile est?”

The next feat of Lord Tyrone, was to throw the bed-curtain through an iron hoop suspending the tester, for the purpose of convincing Lady Beresford that his appearance was real; grounding his proof on the impossibility of this being accomplished by *mortal* agency; thereby laying claim to this interference with nature's laws as being a miracle, and therefore subjecting it to the same principles as other miraculous agency: by these let it be tested—and particularly by the fact that it was a *private* miracle, wrought for the conviction of one individual, and carefully concealed even from a second—and then will it be pronounced unworthy of belief.

But the crowning absurdity yet remains. Lady Beresford was still unconvinced. “You are hard of belief,” said he: “I must not touch you; it would injure you irreparably: it is not for spirits to touch mortal flesh.” Lady Beresford remarked, that she did not regard a small blemish. “You are a woman of courage,” said he: “hold out your hand.” “I did so;

he touched my wrist; his hand was cold as marble; in a moment the sinews shrank up, every nerve withered. 'Now,' said he, 'while you live let no mortal eye behold that wrist; to see it would be sacrilege.'” After this, Lady Beresford endeavoured, but in vain, to awaken Sir Marcus; all her efforts were ineffectual.

Now, is there here another miracle? or is this *spiritual* being, whose body was dead, and who, by the *supposition* of his *appearance* under such circumstances, was deprived of *physical* properties, gifted with extraordinary physical power, so as to leave an indelible brand from his disorganizing touch upon the wrist? The stupendous absurdity about spirits not *touching mortal* flesh, and the sacrilege of beholding the arm thus indelibly marked by physico-spiritual agency, is only in keeping with the other parts of the tale, but is surely enough to destroy the credibility of the narration, at least to every Christian, who can never reconcile the message of mercy of a happy spirit, with a result so strangely inconsistent with all the attributes of our long-suffering God.

The proof that this was a physical state, is again repeated, by the supposed ineffectual attempts to waken Sir Marcus Beresford.

The sequel of the history is not surprising ; common circumstances will account for it, particularly for Lady Beresford's sudden death, produced by the powerful impression made upon the nervous system, at a period when it must have been in a peculiarly excitable state, through the immediate and unexpected conviction that she was only forty-seven, instead of forty-eight. We have on record one instance of voluntary death, without any personal violence ; how much more probable the extinction of life from the full and superstitious belief that she must die. Yet, in the close prospect of dissolution, and in the entire reception of the prophecy alluded to, and therefore in the certainty of its being sacrilege to allow her arm to be seen, she desired Lady —, and her son by Sir Marcus, to examine her arm after her death. It is not reported that any means were employed to avert the threatened calamity, and she died ;—an event rendered still more probable by the susceptibility of the nervous system induced by her recent accouchement ; a period in which sudden death from slight, and inconceivably slight, mental emotion, sometimes even from a perfectly inexplicable cause, has often happened.

In concluding my strictures upon this narra-

tive, I may mention, as points of minor consideration, the description of the injury sustained. "That every nerve withered, and every sinew shrank," is evidently got up, to add to the interest of the tale ; since, at all events, the *withering* of the nerves would not, could not, be visible. Besides, the prediction of Lord Tyrone was not verified, inasmuch as Lady Beresford *did not die in child-birth*, nor till she had *completed her forty-seventh year*.

Next of Lord Lyttleton, the circumstances of whose death are well known. It is manifest that this case is very analogous to that of Colonel Gardiner, in many of its circumstances. The disordered state of Lord Lyttleton's health will fully account for the appearance : and his lordship's sudden death cannot be considered as extraordinary, under any circumstances, subjected as he was to those fits of suffocation ; how much less so, when the influence of this morbid state must doubtless have been immensely increased by the powerful impression which had been made upon the nervous system ; while the depressing agency of the same cause, would have greatly tended to diminish the power of re-action, and consequently to extinguish the chance that the energies of the constitution might be able to surmount the

destructive agency of the disease. There is nothing at all extraordinary in Lord Lyttleton's not believing that the hour of midnight had passed, as his friends wished him to believe; because it is difficult to conceive any man, of common sensibility, losing one hour out of twelve, under such circumstances; while, as the period of midnight drew on, the feelings must have been wrought up by suspense, and susceptibility must have been accumulated about the brain, even to its highest pitch of excitation.

It is, however, necessary to put a limit to the investigation of histories of this kind, or I should unduly trespass upon the patience of my readers, and I would not willingly draw further on their kindness. With regard to these cases it must be said, however, that some of them admit of immediate reference to the principles laid down in the foregoing Essay;—others are so defective in circumstantial details, that they allow of no reasoning at all upon them;—while others are the manifest creations of the designing; of the involuntary dupes to themselves; or of the dupes of others. It may be that some are inexplicable; but do we not act wisely in referring such cases to principles which we can explain, rather than

to adopt the incomprehensible hypothesis of a spiritual appearance?—In conclusion, I will only request their attention for a few more pages, in order to the completion of my design in this Essay, and to take a general review of the whole argument, with the inferences to be drawn from it.

CHAPTER XVII.

Summary review of the preceding argument.

BEFORE I proceed to the conclusions I would draw from a consideration of this whole subject, it will be useful shortly to review the ground already travelled over, and to point out the successive steps of our progress.

We have seen that the cause of true religion always suffers in proportion as it is associated with any system of irrational belief. This proposition is shown by reason; and it is confirmed by experience: witness the examples of the Roman Catholic worshipper, the Mohammedan, the Hindoo, and the North American devotee; all showing, that man is superstitious in proportion as he deviates from re-

leaved religion ; and hence arises a very strong presumption, that superstition is opposed, in its nature and essence, to the genius of Christianity.

Real religion always gains by *inquiry*, since it is based on truth ; and the more the belief of it is founded on knowledge, the firmer and broader will be its basis ; the more secure its elevation ; the greater the protection afforded to those who seek a shelter from the influence of sin, and the perplexities of this world's contumely ; the more mature, the more highly and delicately flavoured, will be its fruits : while the blight of superstition withers every spiritual manifestation, and renders religion the subject of morbid action ; the object of fear, aversion, and disgust, rather than of the highest hopes, the most permanent satisfaction, and the purest delight.

The honour of God is vindicated, and the decrees of his moral government are justified, by referring to their true cause various circumstances which have often been ascribed to supernatural influence ; and in consequence of which, the human mind has been enthralled by superstition ; unjust and injurious views of the Almighty Governor have been produced ;

and man has been left at the sport of his passions, rather than restored to the guidance of rational motive and principle.

By so doing, we do not rest in second causes,—forgetting the First Great Cause, and referring every thing to physical agency;—but we claim its proper influence for that material medium, through which mental operations can alone be manifested; and upon which, *since sin entered into the world, and death by sin*, this influence of the Fall has been mainly exerted.

The essential character of superstition consists in a belief of the existence of some supernatural power, superadded or opposed to the providence of God,—that God, who is infinite in wisdom, and mercy, and love, and who requires the submission of the heart and understanding to his revealed will; while the influence of superstition subjugates the reason, obscures the perception of what is holy, and just, and true; perverts the understanding, and sets aside the volition and responsible agency of man.

Superstition may be referred to the following causes; namely,

False and irrational views on the subject of the agency of a Divine power:

Ignorance of the phenomena of nature; and still more so, of the providential government of God :

Fear, from whatever cause arising :

Coincidence :

Fraud and hypocrisy :

Influence of the imagination, and of external circumstances operating upon it: and,

The agency of brainular action and irritation.

Most of the causes which have been mentioned tend to produce this latter state, and to occasion considerable excitement of the brain, terminating in irritation. And since this organ is under the controul of early habit and association, every disturbance of the brainular function may overturn the balance of healthy action in every department of mental manifestation; while the latter effect will be proportioned to the intensity and continuance of the former cause.

This disturbance of organ and function may be primary and immediate; or it may be secondary and sympathetic; but in either case, a peculiar irritation of the brain will be set up, in consequence of which, that organ will have escaped the controul of the presiding mind, and will continue to act on without its guidance and direction.

That the brain is thus liable to irritation from various physical causes, is proved from its material properties ; from its peculiar adaptation to its functions in different individuals, and in varying states of the same individual ; of health or disease, energy or feebleness, activity or indolence ; from its requiring a due supply of pure and healthy blood ; and by the completeness of its functions, or its different degrees of imperfection, accordingly as that supply may have been only just sufficient, or redundant, or defective ; and still further, as it may or may not have undergone its purifying change in the lungs ; from the fact of its suffering as an organ of mind in all the reflex irritations of all the organs of the body, stomach, skin, lungs, &c. &c. ; from the *unwonted* irritability of convalescents ; from the varying effect of certain articles of food, according to the prevailing temperament ; and from the influence of too much or too little sleep, and differing accordingly as the one or the other state of too much or too little blood may have prevailed.

A precisely similar effect may be produced by mental emotion ; thus proving that the brain may be similarly acted upon from *within and without*, from the body and the mind.

This material organ, thus extensively connected, and thus variously liable to irritation, is the *only organ* for mental manifestation; not, indeed, that *brain itself* reasons, remembers, imagines, distinguishes, or associates: but that it is the only medium through which we become conscious of these mental operations; wanting which, we should know nothing of their existence: when defective, *they* also would be incomplete; and, when irritated, they would become perverted.

Intense thought excites brainular action, and requires a large supply of blood, in order to keep up that excitement; therefore its more important intellectual functions cannot be carried on perfectly, except by supposing the perfect integrity of the sanguiferous system,—dependent as it is upon the functions of digestion, assimilation, nutrition, and various other processes, which, if interrupted, produce uneasiness in their respective organs, and consequent sympathetic irritation of the brain.

The brain is subjected to a variety of morbid impressions, which will occasion corresponding changes upon the mental manifestations.

The morbid impressions thus produced, will be characterized by the particular bodily or mental source whence they were originally

derived, and therefore will admit of many and great differences; witness the sanguine expectations and predominant hopes of the consumptive patient: the dark clouds, melancholic vapours, and gloomy images of the dyspeptic; and the anxieties and solitudes of the sufferer from cardiac disease, yet his occasional good spirits even to the end.

If this be the case certainly and avowedly with regard to a few forms of disease, which we can trace with a certain degree of presumed accuracy, may we not infer that analogous effects will be produced by every corresponding morbid change of every organ of the body, though we may have been unable as yet to trace its agency? And this being granted, may not many erroneous mental manifestations be referrible to an irritating cause of this kind?

The brain, so circumstanced, is liable to many causes of irritation, excitement, and exhaustion.

Simple excitement will occasion more or less of permanent disorder of this organ, and by so doing will interrupt a due supply of nervous influence to the various viscera of the body; their functions are feebly performed: and this want of energy is directly propagated to the brain, by a retrograde movement. This

action and reaction produce incalculable deviations from health of body, as well as from the aptitude for correct mental operations; the balance of power is destroyed, and disorder of the general health is the result.

Thus feebleness of the brain results from a lavish expenditure of its energies: it is not recruited by rest, because its supply of healthy blood is diminished as a consequence of this very feebleness. In order to answer this increased demand, the heart and arterial system are called upon for augmented action: *then* febrile commotion is produced; the brain is liable to become the slave of any other organ of the body in a state of irritation; and morbid images are occasioned.

These morbid images are not to be removed by reasoning, because they result from organic agencies, which have escaped from the presidency of the will, and have usurped its authority.

Since, under these circumstances, the brain is not accessible to reasoning, no bounds can be set to the creation of unreal and disconnected images; and since the function of comparison, and the judgment which results from its exercise, are now utterly useless, a condition of the brain, and therefore of the mani-

festations of mind, has been produced, which is most favourable to the creation of supernatural appearances.

Actual consciousness may be suspended by a powerful cause acting upon the brain, even during its waking and healthy state; much more when enfeebled by disease, or by any other oppressing cause. Hence unreal images may be produced by the brain, without any consciousness of the action by which they are called into being; and when this consciousness is lost for the time, the mind is prepared for receiving as *real*, *any* and *all* the creations of a vivid fancy.

If *simple* excitement be exchanged for that which is *morbid*, especially if the brain be suffering from the oppression of invading disease (more particularly if that disease be of a specific threatening or destructive character,) mental manifestation is more disturbed, and there happens a greater perversion of sensorial, intellectual, and moral movements; which will only be gradually restored by the slow return of bodily health.

In this state of disturbance, fearful images will claim the pre-eminence; and the imagination is rendered unduly active in their confection.

Farther : The brain is an organ of most extensive sympathy : it suffers with the maladies of other organs ; and reflects its own sufferings, so as to produce morbid action upon them ; and then itself becomes the subject of secondary excitement, from the associations thus induced.

Moreover, it is liable to peculiar irritation, not only from the character of every cause of disturbance to the organ which forms the first link in the chain of morbid action, but also from every kind and degree of such irritation.

In all its own diseases, the functions of the brain suffer most deeply, and are accompanied by a frightful degree of debility. It is quite impossible to predicate the way in which its own morbid actions will be shown ; since they are commonly opposed to the general character, and will even vary, according to the portion of brain which happens to become the seat of irritation ; and, after all, many minuter shades of perversion will escape our observation.

In fact, the manifestations of *spiritual existence* are characterized by the material medium through which they become cognizable ; and the perversion which these have suffered forms a consequence of man's primal sin, and *now*

becomes a portion of his state of trial here below.

The sympathies of the brain are most extensive; particularly—

With the heart; the disturbance of whose function may occasion the apparent abolition, and the real suspension, of all mental manifestation.

With the blood; in relation to its quantity, and vital principles: any sudden alteration in the one or the other may occasion the entire suspension of the intellectual faculties, and give rise to various perversions, according to changing circumstances.

With the organs of respiration; these are subjected to many states of disordered action; and for every one of these there may be a corresponding variety of cerebral irritation; and this will be followed by disturbance of the intellectual functions, so that many forms of morbid cerebral manifestation may be the result; and these again will tend to produce disturbance of the chest, which in its turn will irritate the brain.

With the stomach and alimentary canal; not only from their diseases, but from the influence of many articles of diet or medicine; producing extraordinary irritations of the brain, and

various spectral illusions. This is shown by the influence of tea, coffee, alcoholic fluids, and *opium*, upon *which* last has been sometimes dependent alleged visions of angels, and the agency of heavenly spirits.

With the liver; which is justly suspected of giving rise to many forms of *melancholy*.

With the function of secretion in general; which is shown in the familiar instance of the excitement of a flow of saliva, by the mental impression of pleasant food; and its immediate arrest from any cause, mental or bodily, which interferes with the digestive process; and also by the copious secretion of tears, from the emotion of grief, aye, even from that sorrow which springs from listening to a history of fictitious woe.

With the muscular system; witness the almost incredible efforts which will be made from a violent exercise of volition, and the influence of a powerful will in sustaining muscular actions of a less intense character, for a very long time, as in the acts of reading, writing, speaking, or walking: witness also the muscular weariness arising from fatigue of the brain; and the violent convulsive efforts which accompany certain forms of cerebral disease, such as hysteria, epilepsy, and convulsions.

With the skin ; as is shown by the different effects of passion in producing paleness, or redness, or suffusion, and even blackness of the surface ; and the influence of a chill upon the skin, in occasioning morbid mental manifestations, which are again followed by reaction and febrile excitement.

With many other organs of the body ; whose expression of morbid action may not be so well suited for popular discussion.

This sympathetic communion with many organs, occasions the brain physically to rejoice in their health, and to sorrow in their diseases ; and forms the link of communication between them ; so that if action of any kind be interrupted any where, or if a new action be set up, it is immediately known and felt throughout the whole system.

The brain is liable to disturbance from irritation excited in any one of these organs, however slight its degree, and however remote its situation in the economy ; and again, it is especially subjected to morbid action, from any uneasiness or imperfection occurring in any one portion of that system of nerves which exists for the purpose of uniting all these separate functions into one harmonious whole.

The peculiar character of this cerebral dis-

turbance is determined by the particular organ which proves the source of irritation, and by the kind and degree of morbid action to which it is exposed.

As a consequence of this organic irritation, there is much functional disorder ; in fact, much perverted action, much partial or incipient derangement in the world ; and it may be charitably hoped that much of the insane conduct, much of the strange manner, much of the distorted feeling and emotion, many of the errors and prejudices we encounter, may be referred to this cause.

Only, it must here be recollected that, however we may indulge this hope towards others, we must be rigid towards ourselves ; always remembering that we are responsible for the use we make of the function of volition ; since upon this faculty depends our accountability, and since, were it not for the influence of sin, it would always enable us to choose the good and refuse the evil ; and if we follow the converse of this proposition, it is because we do not exercise this function with full purpose of heart.

It is, indeed, true, that we are now become so perverted by sin, that we are unable to employ this faculty to the glory of God ; but then it is equally our duty to endeavour to do so, and nar-

rowly to scrutinize our motives and actions, in order that we may be able, by Divine assistance, to controul every tendency to morbid mental manifestation.

If this incipient morbid action should be very intense, or if it should be long-continued, the integrity of the brain may be destroyed ; and escaping the controul of the presiding will, cerebral disorder of greater magnitude will be produced.

Cerebral disorder is not *mental*, requiring and admitting only of *moral remedies* : these form only one class of curative agents. The brain is merely the organ of mind, not mind itself ; and the disorder of its function arises from its ceasing to be a proper medium for the expression of the varied action and passion of the presiding spirit.

The symptoms of this disorder are often termed *mental alienation*, *lunacy*, *fatuity*, and other names, which lead the attention away from bodily disturbance, to certain mental states, and they identify those states with the brainular disorder, instead of perceiving that the spiritual principle is incapable of any disease, except that of sin ; and instead of referring the actual morbid manifestations of mind to their organic cause.

But if the mental manifestations always become disordered during the prevalence of a certain morbid condition of the brain; and if some of these may be clearly traced to this source, it is not unfair to infer, that certain others, which have usually been ascribed to spiritual agency, may properly be referred to a similar disease of structure.

The slightest congestion in the vessels of the brain, may occasion an alteration in the *manifestation of mind*.

The *perversion* of the *latter* is increased in proportion to the deepening shades of the former.

Hence, certain other morbid states, besides that of congestion, may occasion other deviations from healthy manifestation, and may perhaps account for visions, spectral illusions, apparitions, &c.

Cerebral disorder is marked by feebleness, or perversion, or suspension of the correct information afforded by the organs of sense.

Cerebral disorder is sometimes accompanied by the excessive susceptibility, and morbid creations of these sentinels of the body: hence the frequency of sensorial illusion.

In this state of disturbance originates mental hallucination: the perverted image is brooded over, and recalled, and associated in various

ways, till its reality seems undeniable, and till the patient is carried away by its impulse.

At other times, similar hallucinations are found, as the result of antecedent impressions, and their associated groups; and these also are invested with all the air of truth and reality.

In this state, actual feelings are disregarded; while the morbid images supply their place, and really seem to be the positive results of sensation; and they thus gain the supremacy over the reasoning powers.

These hallucinations, however fugitive at first, may become permanent, and they then constitute delirium or insanity.

Cerebral disorder is often attended by unconquerable wakefulness, great restlessness, and irritability.

The attendant condition of the brain is peculiarly favourable to the production of morbid sensorial and intellectual impressions, and easily glides into a more formidable state of disease.

Cerebral disorder is accompanied by certain deviations from the usual manners and habits of the individual: he is not the same creature, but is commonly absorbed by one dominant idea.

Moral causes, especially powerful mental emotion, will often produce cerebral disorder;

and this being originated, there will follow deepening and more multiplied morbid manifestations, till the patient, becoming decidedly insane, ceases to be an accountable agent.

Yet *moral treatment*, and all the high sanctions of religious motive, will be insufficient to remove cerebral disorder, unless other remedies be directed likewise to the brain, with all its associated sympathies.

This state of cerebral disorder, however originating in moral causes, and however impressed with a sacredness of character, from the high value and importance of religious motive and management, is yet accompanied with certain other bodily effects, which cannot with any semblance of truth be referred to any other than a bodily cause ; such, for instance, as feebleness of the function of volition, palsy, various muscular irritations, and, above all, the expression of the countenance.

If these bodily effects can be easily traced to primary irritation of the brain, it must be remembered, that they will also operate a reflective influence upon that organ, and will place it in a situation peculiarly favourable to erroneous and perverted mental manifestations ; and peculiarly liable to the development of all its morbid sympathies.

The intermittent, and remittent character of several of the maladies of the brain, cannot attach to the influence of a spiritual immaterial principle; and therefore they more clearly connect the morbid manifestations of mind with their organic medium.

Hence, cerebral disorder may be allowed to be capable of producing the perversion of mental manifestation, and of giving rise to those unreal images which have been termed apparitions.

Various causes produce diseased manifestations of mind; and first, *original malconformation* will occasion idiocy, in which there is an apparent obliteration of mental power; yet it cannot be believed for a moment, that the idiot has no soul.

So, in old age, the brain undergoes a change, which unfits it for mental operation; but surely the light of the spiritual principle is not extinguished; nor has its power become limited and diseased, just as it is approaching its transition from the veil of materiality, to the infinite brightness of unfading glory.

A similar obliteration of healthy cerebral function is produced by water on the brain.

Wounds of the brain will produce morbid symptoms of different, and even opposite cha-

racters, according to the precise portion of brainular structure which may have become the subject of injury; according as the brain shall be subjected to, or free from, the pressure of surrounding bone; according to the general shock which the brain may have received from the accident; according to the greater or less loss of blood at the moment, and the greater or less degree of congestion in its vessels; and according to the intensity of the subsequent re-action, and febrile constitutional irritation.

Concussion of the brain simply, is generally attended by a complete loss of power and of recollection, together with the abolition of all the energy and integrity of mental manifestation: carried to a certain length, death will ensue; but more frequently reaction takes place, and is attended by delirium, or insanity, the traces of which are commonly to be found in the existence of perverted action, long after the first effects have ceased.

Compression of the brain will be attended with more or less alteration, and even abolition, of mental manifestation; but commonly differing in kind from the usual effects of concussion.

These symptoms of *spiritual disturbance* are sometimes instantly relieved by taking off the

pressure; but at others, especially if inflammation shall have taken place, the return to perfect health is only through a lengthened series of perverted manifestations.

Fever will occasion large deviations from healthy brainular function; and this, too, differing according to the peculiar agency of the febrile morbid cause, but in every instance attended by perverted mental manifestation.

Supposed visions are the frequent consequence of this state; persons and situations appearing either as they would do in reality, or associated with some erroneous attribute.

Hence, *apparitions are traced, under certain circumstances, to a bodily morbid cause.*

But if this be granted, it can scarcely be denied, that other supernatural appearances may equally be referred to similar, or at least analogous, causes.

Local inflammation of a slow disorganizing character, attacking the brain, or its membranes, perverts or destroys the power of intellectual operation.

The whole class of nervous disorders contribute to *impair*, and under extreme circumstances, to destroy, the manifestations of mind.

Many of these may be effectually resisted

by a *powerful effort of the will*, thus showing the submission of the brain to the presiding spirit or mind.

The same consequence is deduced from the good effect of certain remedies upon the mental manifestations, and especially by the simple action of cold ; so totally inconsistent with all our ideas of spiritual essence.

In hypochondriasis, in some instances, a *primary effect* is produced upon the brain, and, in others, that which is secondary, through the medium of the stomach ; but the *ultimate effect* in both cases is purely cerebral. Mental causes will also produce the same disturbing effects.

Hence again, mental and bodily causes are found to produce the same consequences ; they are originally of a distinct nature, and how can they produce identical effects, but by acting upon one intermediate organ, common to both, and capable alike of receiving impressions from body and mind ? No other organ than the brain can occupy such a relative situation.

The hypochondriac loses the power of the will over his mental manifestations : they are perverted, and present to the mind, images of the most unreal character :

Yet hypochondriasis is produced by primary or secondary irritation of the brain :

Therefore, irritation of the brain is the common accompaniment of these unreal images.

It is reasonable to infer, that irritation of the brain, which we know exists, is the cause of these unreal images, rather than to assume that it is some peculiar state of the spiritual principle, concerning the mode of whose real existence we can know nothing.

The hypochondriac hears voices, sees visions, is assailed by unearthly visitants, and receives admonitions; and, moreover, all these voices, visions, and revelations, are capable of being superseded, and swept away by medical treatment; a clear proof of their origin and tendency.

Hence, a certain state of the brain always occasions disordered manifestations of mind; and again, these have been traced back to functional diseases of the brain.

In both states, unreal and perverted images, even veritable apparitions, the offspring of brainular disturbance, are presented to the mind, with a degree of impressiveness which is superior to that of reason, and which therefore supersedes its power, and annihilates the influence of judgment.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Same subject continued.

IN proceeding with our analysis of the preceding argument, we shall observe, that the same view is confirmed by attending to the phenomena of *sleep*, and especially of its morbid states.

Sleep is not a state of absolute quiescence; of the negation, or even the suspension of action: indeed, some organs appear to possess a greater degree of activity than usual, because, the intellectual function being less employed, a greater supply of nervous energy can be afforded without destroying the balance of constitutional power.

Thus is shown the *unwearied* action of the brain during sleep, inasmuch as it gives off such an amount of nervous energy as shall be sufficient to maintain the activity and integrity of those functions.

But many of its intellectual manifestations are absolutely laid aside; and hence it should seem, that, as an intellectual organ, it is more

liable to exhaustion than as a corporeal agent ; and this is confirmed, day by day, by the greater fatigue, and the more rapid failure of power, which attaches to mental exertion, than to bodily labour.

Therefore, sleep seems to have been provided for the intellectual brain ; and, in consequence of this state, it ceases to be the servant of the spiritual principle, and is no longer obedient to the will.

This repose of the brain is often incomplete ; and then it continues a certain kind of action, without the guidance of the judgment, or the government of the will.

Whenever the brain is in a state of irritation, uiet sleep is impossible ; and a state of morbid wakefulness is not unfrequently the result.

The brain may be roused to a state of excitation by various stimuli ; and therefore i may be acted upon by different disturbing causes, with which we are at present unacquainted ; because we know not the mode of relation subsisting between that viscus and its distant associated organs.

Thus, then, the brain is excited by various causes, producing corresponding varied effects, yet all agreeing in disturbing the manifestations of mind.

In *reverie* there is a continued action of the

brain, without the support of volition or the corrective influence of the judgment; and in this state unreal images are presented to the mind, with all the semblance of truth and reality. Under these circumstances, therefore, it is capable of producing images, imagining situations, and inventing consequences without reason or truth.

But if so, some other analogous, though unknown, process may be the result; and this unknown action may be the creation of spectral forms: at least, there is nothing irrational in this supposition.

This view is supported by the phenomena of nightmare, which are purely cerebral, and always disappear upon perfect waking. It is most frequent and severe in that peculiar condition of the brain which has arisen from intellectual over-action,—namely, the irritability which is the consequence of specific exhaustion.

During this state, the distress of the patient is occasioned by his being placed in some situation of danger, and by his inability to escape from it; and he awakes in violent agitation, with palpitation of the heart, and perspiration, which point out the really intense agony he has suffered from this visionary impression,

produced by a physical condition of the organ of mind.

Nightmare is generally preceded by unwonted drowsiness, and brainular oppression, which enables those who are acquainted with its history, to predict its arrival.

Nightmare may be sometimes dependent upon the irritation of a distant organ: but where this is the case, still, it can only be accomplished through the intervention of the brain; for the patient must be asleep, or he does not suffer from the attack.

Any powerfully exciting cause applied to the brain late at night will almost unerringly bring on the attack in those who are so predisposed, and its intensity will be regulated by the greater or less morbid susceptibility of the cerebral organ, becoming aggravated in its maladies, and receding in its convalescence.

The *illusions* which accompany nightmare are so complete, that the patient verily believes in their actual existence; and it is only by the influence of the judgment, reason, and experience, that he can be disenchanted of their fallacious impression, or can be convinced of the contrary truth.

These *illusions* involve the appearance of different individuals; their speaking and acting

according to certain supposed circumstances, and all the consequences of such words and actions.

But if so, there is nothing unreasonable in supposing that similar illusions may attend other morbid conditions of the brain, during the continuance of which it is even more completely abstracted from the salutary influence of judgment, reason, and experience.

I proceed to the phenomena of *dreaming*.

There is great activity of the brain during sleep: and this is not a consequence of the increased energy of the immaterial principle; because, if it were so, we should have to record perfect ideas, refined images, and correct notices, resulting from the agency of the spiritual principle disencumbered of its material shackles; instead of the common result, imperfect ideas, confused images, and incorrect impressions.

Here again, therefore, we trace dreaming to a peculiar action of the *material brain*, not of the immaterial principle.

The immaterial spirit is not necessarily engaged in the phenomena of dreaming: in sleep, the brain is not its servant, because, during that state, it is unfitted for intellectual operations. When it does act, it is without the

controul of the presiding mind ; and therefore the pathological state of dreaming, instead of the healthy process of correct thinking, is produced.

The modes of association, and the habits of brainular action, are shown by the phenomena of dreaming, especially by that kind of dream which occurs upon being first wakened in the morning.

Dreams result from some uncontrolled or morbid action of the brain ; either primary, from its own disorders, or secondary and sympathetic, arising from irritation of a distant organ, in close communion with itself.

This position is confirmed by the *dreams of animals*, surely not arising from spiritual agency ; and yet they will in consequence bark, and utter various automatic expressions of joy or sorrow.

Farther, this tendency to dreaming in animals is increased by any cause of powerful excitation to the brain.

The *great variety* of dreams may be accounted for by the kind and degree of disturbance to which the brain has been subjected, whether from primary or secondary irritation ; each separate disorder of every organ and function of the body thus forming a source of dreaming ;

and all combine in establishing a groundwork capable of constant change, and of almost endless extension and variation.

There are no dreams in sound and quiet sleep, when the body is healthy and the mind at ease, because there exists no cause of organic irritation to the brain; but dreams will be found among the very first symptoms of madness.

In sleep, the manifestation of the intellectual faculties is suspended; and therefore these do not enter into the component parts of dreaming. There is always something wanting to constitute dreams perfect mental operations, and which absent, something stamps them with the character of deviation from correct thinking; consequently the apparently intellectual trains of dreams, are really and truly mere organic associations.

Dreams are not sleeping thoughts, influenced by that sinful change which has passed upon all men; for since in this process there is no exercise of the will, there can be no responsibility: the organ of mind has suffered from the perverting influence of the Fall; its manifestations are become disordered, and dreaming constitutes one of its diseases.

During sleep, the *senses* are incapable of con-

trolling the wanderings of the intellectual function: but they are capable of receiving impressions, which will irritate the nerves, and form the basis of a dream, in the course of which may be produced, according to circumstances of varied irritation, but not according to any principle of choice or selection, a multitude of ideas, thoughts, opinions, and hallucinations.

But these trains are imperfect, undefined, absurd, indifferently true or false, incoherent and extravagant.

Therefore, they are not the production of the immaterial spirit, disencumbered of its material organ; but do truly result from a continued action of the brain, after it has escaped the controul of the immaterial principle.

An impression of bodily uneasiness received during the day, will often form the germ of a nocturnal dream; and thus affords another proof, that organic irritation, not mental operation, is the proximate cause of dreaming.

Many other circumstances will operate as exciting causes of dreams: such as, the act of turning in bed; change of temperature during the night; medicines, particularly of the narcotic character; mental emotion; protracted study; intemperance of every kind;

fever of every description ; in fact, every point of local and constitutional irritation, in proportion to the intimacy of its communion with the brain.

All these causes agree in producing a peculiar excitement and commotion of the brain, though often differing in kind and degree, and therefore giving rise to varying results in the complexion of the consequent images.

In approaching sleep, under the influence of some one of these irritants, unreal images appear, fade, and pass away, sometimes with a great indistinctness of recollection ; while, upon other occasions, they leave an impression so vivid as to retain the semblance of truth, and so strong, that the individual cannot be convinced of its fallacy.

This state is elucidated by the condition of the mildly insane ; in whom a very slight deviation from the integrity of the brain will produce amazing changes in its functions, in its intellectual power, and in its disposition to produce monstrous and incoherent images ; and these alterations will be increased during sleep.

Brainular disease, or the disorder of any and every organ associated with it by nervous sympathy, will produce dreaming ; and this mor-

bid state will derive its peculiarities from whatever disturbance may form the first link in the chain of morbid function.

The dreams of disease will be varied according to the nature and extent, duration, period, simplicity, or complication of the morbid action which produces them ; and also according to the temperament, habits, education, and peculiarities of the dreamer.

To such a characteristic extent does this occur, that, although our knowledge is as yet too limited for such a purpose, it is most probable that dreams will become symptoms, in a more advanced state of medical science, and that they will assist us in localizing disease.

It is at least certain, that dreams do actually mark the approach, development, intensity, and gradual decline of malady, as well as the return to convalescence.

The illusions which occur in dreaming, may frequently be shown to have been the exaggerated or sophisticated expression of a *real sensation* ; thus again showing the connexion between dreams and their organic cause.

The illusions attendant upon the dreams of insanity are most complete ; as also in that form of fever which more particularly attacks the nervous system. In both these cases, the

peculiar state of the brain, which occasions this morbid condition of its manifestations, is often suspended during the day, and again renewed at night, so soon as the organ of mind shall have lost the opportunity of verifying its impressions through the medium of the senses.

There is a manifest difference between dreams which arise from a primary, or secondary irritation of the brain ; and between those which attend a hyper-energetic, or a depressed state of the organ, modified likewise by the prevailing cast of constitution and character.

These states may alternate, not only during one night, but also during one dream ; which will serve to account for the greater or less degree of cohesion and rationality, which is often remarkable in the same dream.

Dreams will be modified by a variety of physical and moral causes operating upon the brain ; particularly by literary labour, by the pursuits of benevolence, by the follies and frivolities of the age, by the provocatives of society, and by various other analogous influences.

Now *all* these causes operate upon the brain, and modify its actions ; and many of them

create irritation, produce dreaming, and characterize its images.

During sleep, man is unable to oppose the agency of these mental causes upon the brain; because the combination of ideas is *then* involuntary, and becomes a stimulus to the mental organ to enter into new associations, and to give a greater variety of character to the dreams.

Thus, in order to the production of dreaming, brainular action must be dissociated from the will; and then, being subjected to its own agency, or to the impulse it has received from organic causes, these phenomena occur.

Dreams are also frequently produced from the recollected impressions of the preceding, or of some antecedent day; for impressions once made upon the brain, may ever afterwards be revived by its own action, spontaneously and without effort; yet here also, brainular action must precede, as well as in the case of *accidental association*, such as in dreams of hunger, and thirst, &c.

Somnambulism is a kind of dream, in which certain intimately associated habits, rendered automatic by reiterated employment during the waking state, are re-produced in sleep,

without apparent volition; these actions corresponding with the feelings, emotions, or sentiments, which constitute the mental fabric of the dream.

This peculiar excitement of the brain may be referred for its cause to the influence of some intellectual stimulus; or to some morbid agency, under the impression of its own diseases; or to the sympathetic disturbance, arising from some other suffering organ.

To this may be added the operation of custom, and of having had the organ of mind intensely fixed upon one object. But custom, or habit, is a purely cerebral impression, and is associated in every instance with a peculiar state of the brain, to such an extent, that its influence becomes instinctive, and that its associated actions are performed without the assistance of the will.

Second sight is a faculty which may be referred to a species of somnambulism, in which the mental manifestations confer with themselves, and produce a prospective result. Many instances of second sight, no doubt, depend upon that knowledge of circumstances which, in spite of every precaution, will creep abroad when any great events are about to be accomplished. But this will by no means account

wholly for the many circumstances in which the *seer* claims, that

“The sunset of life gives me mystical lore,

And coming events cast their shadows before.”

This alleged faculty attaches only to advanced life, when the brainular function is already impaired: it is commonly associated with cerebral excitement, and is peculiarly remarkable “*when the hour is on him;*” and its occurrence is to be found principally among a most superstitious people, where every glen is inhabited by an endless variety of spirits, good or bad. Let these characteristic circumstances be appreciated, and let there be added to their effect the influence exerted upon the seer and his auditors, by having been brought up with the full belief in the existence of this faculty; and the silent, unseen, but most deeply influential operation of this firm belief, upon the mental organ: and then will it be unhesitatingly classed with other phenomena, which result from similar states of cerebral excitement, when the brain has escaped from the guidance of the will and the judgment, and continues its morbid function without any *safeguard* or *direction* from the immortal principle.

Animal magnetism, another very analogous condition, is most easily produced upon a

brain in an irritable and excited state ; more readily in females than in males. The concurrence of the magnetizer and magnetized is necessary to the completion of the process, as well as the full determination of their will towards its accomplishment : and certain actions of the hands appear to be a very important adjuvant to the perfect formation of magnetic somnambulism.

During the magnetic orgasm there occurs a highly excited and disturbed action of the brain.

¶ Hence the preceding and accompanying phenomena of this state are purely physical, and result from the operation of brain upon brain.

Doubtless the production of magnetic phenomena is greatly assisted by the powerful impression upon the mind : but they can never be fully manifested without the intervention of the material organ ; and therefore they may safely be referred to a *physical*, not a spiritual agency.

During the continuance of magnetic somnambulism, there occurs (so it is alleged) a power of predicting certain physical future events ; an *impression* very analogous to the function of *second sight*, or even to presentiment, &c.

Thus the effects, produced by a known *physical* condition, are similar to those for which a

spiritual and supernatural agency has been claimed : if it be granted to the one, it cannot be withheld from the other ; and if it be denied to one, it must be so to both.

And since, in one instance, it has been clearly traced to a *physical origin*, there is good ground for believing the same origin for the similar condition.

In all these, and analogous states, the imagination has a wonderful influence in occasioning that peculiar excitement of the brain which is favourable to the production of such mental manifestations : especially to all the undefined creations of fear ; and, above all, to the belief in apparitions.

This excited state of the imagination produces a susceptibility to morbid brainular action, and is, in itself, a frequent cause of dreaming ; because it constitutes the precise state of peculiar adaptation to erroneous and spectral impressions.

Visions during trances, or prolonged slumbers, where they are not the offspring of imposture or self-delusion, can only be ascribed to a peculiar morbid action of the brain.

These visions will be characterized by the predominance of the essential attributes of the physical temperament of the individual, accord-

ing as this may have been simply sanguineous, or melancholic, or choleric, or phlegmatic ; or as these simpler states may have been more or less combined in the same character.

These facts show that a morbid condition of the brain will occasion the creation of unreal images ; and that their influence upon the manifestations of mind is very extensive and mischievous.

In what consists this peculiar morbid condition of the brain, we know not ; because we are unacquainted with the mode of its healthy action, and therefore cannot ascertain the deviations from its perfect functions.

But the same truth will apply to all the organic functions of the body. This only do we certainly know, that all these functions will be disturbed by any cause which prevents the quiet calm of the organ.

And, if so, may not the same cause, that is, *organic irritation*, disturb the function of the brain, in its most complex office ; namely, that of manifesting the powers and attainments of the mind ?

All histories of apparitions, &c. rest on a basis of human testimony, rather than on any process of reasoning ; and facts are alleged in support of supernatural visitations ; these facts

forming the evidence of so many persons of assumed health of body and soundness of mind.

But in some instances this supernatural influence, which was fully believed to exist in an earlier state of society, and which then was not wanting in facts for its support, has utterly vanished before the “morning air” of education, science, and religion.

If so, doubt is thrown on human testimony ; and we are constrained to believe, that these histories have been fabricated by the designing, or that their authors have been self-deceived : and if we adopt the latter and more pleasing alternative, what is so likely to have occasioned such delusion, with rightly-intentioned individuals, as a peculiar state of brainular irritation, giving rise to spectral appearances ?

Dreams are sometimes supposed to have been commissioned by Divine Providence, for the discovery of crime ; a revelation having been thus made to some individuals of circumstances which have led to the detection of the criminal ; and this is made to rest upon the justice of the Almighty, whose vengeance pursues the wicked, and suffereth not a murderer to live. But God is merciful as well as just, and rejoices to extend the day of grace : he willeth not the

death of a sinner, but rather that he should turn unto him and live.

Moreover, the present life is not the day of judgment or of retribution, but of proffered pardon in Christ Jesus. This is not that *approaching* period, when the Divine justice will be fully displayed : there is now an inequality in the lot of the righteous and the wicked, which will only be rendered right at the last great day of account ; so that it is not inconsistent with the dealings of Providence, that the wicked should escape punishment in the present life.

Moreover, it has happened, that the innocent have suffered, instead of the really guilty, in consequence of error arising from a judgment formed upon circumstantial evidence ; another proof, that errors are permitted here, in order that we may cast our eyes forward, for the full display of God's perfect and impartial justice.

On the contrary supposition, the perfect holiness of Jehovah would be impugned by the present escape of the actual perpetrator of crime, and by the destruction of the innocent.

Besides, this result of *discovery* is by no means invariable ; and if it be neither necessary nor undeviating, we may well question the existence of any special interference of Providence, in

order to its being obtained, since these would be qualities of such providential agency.

Finally, dreaming may be almost always, *if not always*, accounted for on other principles, less liable to objection, and particularly upon primary or sympathetic irritation of the brain, arising from organic disturbance of some one of the viscera of the body ; or from moral causes operating immediately or intermediately upon the mental organ, the brain. This has been exemplified in the narrative of the discovery of the murder of Maria Marten by William Corder.

Besides, it is really a greater instance of providential wisdom and care, when events are brought about by the agency of ordinary means, concurring to an end, rather than by any special interference with God's established order of nature.

CHAPTER XIX.

The same subject continued.

WITH regard to the vision of angels, &c., the grounds on which this vision is not to be expected, in these latter days, have been already stated; and it may be further argued, that in the early period of the Christian church, there was always an object to be accomplished, which was necessary to the completion of the whole will of God; but that now, no such end is to be effected by that species of revelation to expiring mortality, for which Divine authority has been claimed.

There is also another striking difference between the two states: *in the former*, the individuals were in high health, with unimpaired faculties, and were enabled to perceive what it pleased God to reveal; but in the latter, the

spirit is just hovering on the verge of an eternal scene, yet is *still* confined to its material tene-ment, though crumbling down around it ; and whatever it may perceive, is through the medium of that corporeal habitation.

This surely is easily conceivable : an *inward* revelation is not perceived by the external senses ; yet the recipient of such revelation can only be conscious of its existence, by attending to, and perceiving it, by reflecting upon, and remembering it, and by a determination, in the strength of divine grace, to act upon it. But attention, perception, reflection, memory, judgment, and volition, are intellectual faculties, whose functions are performed through the medium of the brainular organ : therefore it is only through it, that man become sconscious of such revelation ; and therefore, according to all the analogy of the Divine government, such communication would not be made to an expiring organ, but rather at a period when the full tide of its faculties was unbroken.

The day of such revelation is now only marked on the page of prophetic history.

Still further, these visions, when they do occur, are referred to the *bodily senses*, in proof of their presence ; and, at the same time, the patient suffers from other ocular spectra, and

sees before him objects which have no real existence.

Moreover, these visions are not confined to the death-bed of the Christian, but are common to the closing scene of those over whose ashes the flickering and feeble flame of hope dares not linger, and expires in gloomy uncertainty; because their lives had been a continuous tissue of disobedience, and they had come to their end, in wilful rebellion against the Most High.

And lastly, this vision of angels is also, common to the *maniac*, who mixes up himself with the glorious scenes of his own hallucinative creations.

But if these premises be correct, it is surely more conducive to the glory of God, to believe that these appearances own a *bodily origin*; and that they are ascribable to the imperfect, failing, disordered, or perverted powers of the organ of mental manifestation.

This train of reasoning will not, in any degree, apply to the revelations of Scripture, which are of a totally different order; and have been vouchsafed to man, for the foundation of his faith, the regulation of his heart, and the conduct of his life.

Yet, although *truth* cannot be influenced, in any measure, by the peculiar state of the physical temperament, and more particularly of the intellectual organ, still the impression of that truth may be so affected and altered, and the consequent zeal and earnestness with which it is received ; or the caution, hesitancy, doubt, and prejudice, which absorb and enthrall the mind.

Presentiment very generally results from some antecedent physical or moral impression, and involves a peculiar state of the brain, either occasioned by the actual development or threatened approach of primary or sympathetic disease ; or artificially induced by the agency of animal magnetism, during which state it is enabled to feel the approach of any great disaster to the constitution.

Presentiments are supported by a variety of warnings or omens ; and these are occasionally rendered true by the influence of the terror they excite : generally speaking, the predicted consequences do not follow ; and, when they do, they form the exception, and not the rule.

Presentiments are sometimes to be found existing without any traceable basis, and they are then generally arising from a physical state attending the incubation of disease.

The case of martyrs is not depending upon supernatural agency ; neither can it be referred, without great absurdity, and a grievous sophistication of sound reasoning, to a physical condition, in which great suffering not only ceases to be painful, but actually becomes the source of grateful sensation (Dr. Hibbert *in loco*). The highly-elevated state of the martyr's mind, and the glory which is to follow ; the desire to be found faithful unto death, and to afford an example of sure trust and confidence in God, and reliance upon his promises ; added to the corporeal agency of these powerful impressions upon the brain ; would increase its energy, and confer extraordinary powers of manifestation, and keep up a degree of animal excitement, by which the patient is carried out of himself, and his feelings are wrought up to ecstasy. But this is a brainular state, and one which predisposes to the creation of supernatural appearances.

The *Christian's* support under trials, and in death, in the fires and the waters of temptation, is derived from the ordinary operations of the Holy Spirit, and not from the intervention of supernatural creations.

There is no instance of endurance recorded on the part of the Christian martyr, which has

not been paralleled by the serenity of the heathen under torture; consequently the fallacious argument from experience is here quite inapplicable.

The agency of evil spirits is generally referred to possession and temptation.

In the former case, it is commonly supposed that there is a contention between good and evil spirits for the supremacy, and for command over the soul. This state is to be referred to insanity, dependent upon a morbid condition of the brain, and is usually accompanied by a disposition to suicide.

Temptation may be ascribed to a physical or a moral cause; but in neither case does it own a supernatural origin. Its peculiar agency is exerted upon the same principle which produced the fall of our first parents, and which now operates upon their posterity, as it did also upon them, through the medium of their sensorial and intellectual capacities; its present influence being augmented by the consequences of that fall, and by the introduction of those depraved mental conditions which render the spiritual principle assailable to the assaults of sin; or which, in other words, prepare it for listening to the voice of temptation.

Satan, as the *agent* in presenting temptation

to the mind, avails himself of his knowledge of these particular aptitudes;—and suggests precisely that form of disobedience to the commands of the Most High, which will find the readiest access to the spiritual principle, through the intervention of constitutional, or habitual tendencies. But these form no excuse for yielding to temptation; because the presiding mind, and its peculiar attribute, the will, are given to man for his guidance and government, and therefore he is responsible for his choice of evil, and his preference of that broad road which leadeth to destruction.

The foregoing principles apply themselves naturally to the doctrine and belief of *apparitions*.

There is a peculiar state of the brain, and that a morbid state, in which these appearances are not infrequent. This is generally the result of impending disease, but may be produced by the action of certain remedies.

In many cases of supposed apparitions, the anticipated results have not followed; and of those instances in which these seem to have been consecutive, the most remarkable may be accounted for on natural principles.

Apparitions are presented to spiritual contemplation only; they have no real existence;

and therefore the senses which give them form and substance, and other material properties, must be deceived; and this illusion must be attended by deviation from healthy action of the mental manifestations, and therefore of the manifesting organ.

Dr. Hibbert's hypothesis of a renovation of past feelings is untenable, because it will not account for all the cases which it ought to explain: it will not account for recalling these impressions at the particular moment: it will not say why this apparent recollection is found to be invariable only during the continuance of a state of irritation of the brain; and it will not explain the fear with which such an apparition is viewed, a principle so greatly opposed to the delight with which we dwell upon the form, and look, and expression, of those whom we have loved and esteemed.

Sceptical opinions are not fostered by referring dreams, visions, voices, apparitions, &c. to a state of morbid irritation of the organ of mind.

When the brain is disordered, the sensations impressed upon it are not lost, but perverted: the senses themselves are mere sentinels, placed as safeguards to the system; and the power of receiving or combining, considering

and weighing the results, rests entirely with the brain as the organ of mind, and depends upon its attention to the notices it receives.

Mere impression is at all times unsatisfactory, till it has been referred to, and judged of, and estimated by the presiding mind, which determines its truth and value, its fallacy and worthlessness, according to its possessing or to its wanting certain attributes of reality.

The loss of sensation must depend upon a certain degree of paralysis of the sentient extremities of the nerves; a state of disease, which is much more frequently referrible to irritation of the brain, than of the local organ of sense.

And supposing the disorder to be confined to the local organ, it will much more frequently happen that its function is unduly excited, than that it should be obliterated.

This great activity and perversion do, notwithstanding, very generally result from primary irritation of the brain; and are accompanied by sensorial illusions, and by the creation of unreal images.

But apparitions are intellectual illusions, and proceed from an irritated intellectual organ: hence the analogy of sensorial disease is

in favour of the position assumed in the present Essay.

This question is not one which involves the existence of spiritual beings: this is not denied; nor as to the nature of their functions, for of this we have no means of judging. But it is this, whether certain apparitions, for which a spiritual origin has been claimed, may not be accounted for, more simply, on another principle.

Spiritual beings are not cognisable by the corporeal eye; their existence, therefore, cannot be demonstrated; it must be received as a matter of faith. Of the mode of their access to the mind, or of their agency upon it, nothing is revealed; but, so far as we are taught in Holy Scripture concerning spiritual influence, it differs in its essential character, and in every particular attribute, from that which is ascribed to the modern ghost.

Since the latter apparitions do not lead to any beneficial result, we believe them to differ, in their very nature, from the commissioned messengers of God's holy will.

As instances of these alleged supernatural appearances have been distinctly traced to phenomena of bodily agency, it is most rational

to refer certain other unknown but analogous conditions to an identical or a similar cause.

It is unnecessary to call in the aid of spiritual agency, where a peculiar morbid state of the brain will account for the disordered mental manifestation.

Nor is this explanation to be abandoned, because it does not solve *all* the difficulties of the subject: this is scarcely to be expected of any natural process. How much less, therefore, can we hope to unravel all the hidden laws of the finest and most complicated portion of the living machinery,—even the brain!

Neither is it just to call in the aid of spiritual influence, which cannot be explained at all, in order to account for a physical morbid state, which may be partly explained upon natural principles, but of which we cannot fathom all the peculiarities.

No proof has ever yet been attempted, of the identity of the modern apparition with the spiritual influence of the sacred writings.

It is allowed that man has no faculty by which he can perceive spiritual objects; and therefore some deviation from perfect health, that is, some morbid state, must be necessary to this perception.

It then only becomes a question whether

apparitions are the creation of a peculiar mode of cerebral irritation ; or whether, *they being real spiritual existences*, this peculiar *morbid irritation* is necessary to their perception ?

But if in either case morbid action must exist, it is surely much more agreeable to reason and revelation, that *intellectual and sensorial illusions* should be the *production of irritated brain* ; rather than that *this form of disease* should be developed, in order to confer an *additional power* upon the brain, to *enlarge its faculties*, and to *enable it to receive notices* which could in no other way be obtained.

If the opposite conclusion be maintained, surely *none can decide the kind and degree of this morbid state*, which may be necessary to confer the newly-created faculty ; and who is to distinguish between it and many forms of incipient insanity ?

The instance referred to in the history of Elisha is, throughout, the relation of a *miraculous* interference of the Most High on behalf of his servant ; and is, therefore, classed with other miracles, which have long since ceased from the present age of the Christian church.

The tendency to scepticism, as connected with this question, arises, not from the belief of the dependance of mind upon matter for its

manifestation, but from the prevalence of practical infidelity: from the desire of the heart to lose sight of its accountability, and from the wish to refer its wanderings to some kind of supernatural influence, involuntary, and therefore in every instance irresponsible.

This fatal tendency is corrected by upholding man's accountability, and the supremacy of his will; and by separating the results of simple brainular action, after it has escaped the control of the presiding mind, from the effects of spiritual influence. Thus man is left without excuse, and is brought back to the broken law of God, and its consequences, the wrath of that holy Being, the necessity for repentance, and the need of a Saviour.

Far from this explanation leading man to undervalue the intervention of a superintending Providence, the more deeply he becomes acquainted with nature's operations, the more does he see of the wisdom, and power, and mercy, and love, of every appointment; the more fully therefore does he receive the revelations of *His will*, with meekness and obedience.

It has been stated that *all* the histories of apparitions rest on the same basis of human testimony. But this is not a safe foundation for belief, since it is liable to be acted upon by

prejudice,—is subject to error, is disturbed by feeling and passion, and is acted upon by many hidden motives.

It is absurd to claim the authority of individuals so circumstanced in favour of ghosts ; and yet, on the other hand, to reject the explanations of reason and science ; and to set at nought the experience, not of those who have *never* seen apparitions, but of those who, having seen them, have not been deluded into a belief of their real and spiritual existence, but who have accounted for them upon physical principles. Surely these demand, at least, an *equal* share of attention ; and if each were fairly dealt by, there would be no fear for the result ; and reason and common sense would triumph over groundless apprehension and superstitious fear.

By these results, the existence of a supreme superintending Providence is established, and its ways towards man are justified ; for God is infinitely holy and wise and good.

When a *natural* explanation can be found for that which is *difficultly* conceivable upon any other principle, it is the duty of the Christian humbly to accept such explanation ; especially when it offers a beautiful exposition of the

debasing influence of the Fall upon the manifestations of the spiritual principle.

Thus, by withdrawing the agency of Omnipotence from the shadowy wand of superstition, its perfect knowledge and its holy operations are vindicated from the unhallowed creations of mortality; and the influence of the word and Spirit of God is for ever separated from the mimotic influence, which results from a disordered state of the animal fibre.

In fact, they only impugn the power of Omnipotence, who question the agency, upon spiritual mind, of its organic medium of manifestation; and who deny that disorder of such medium must be followed by defective, or excessive, or perverted manifestations; and consequently, who disbelieve that primary or sympathetic irritation of the brain may suffice for the creation of apparitions.

The inhalation of nitrous-oxyde gas produces an effect upon the brain, admirably adapted to the calling up of visions and apparitions.

But what is still more important to remark is, that the effect of this impression differs according to the peculiarity of the physical temperament of each individual; or to the varying condition of that temperament (of health and disease) at the hour of its exhibition.

These facts afford two important conclusions: first, apparitions and unreal images are produced by a cause operating exclusively upon the brain; and next, the specific character of these apparitions, arising from the same source of cerebral irritation, will vary according to the predominant constitution, or to its fluctuating state of organic function.

Nay, more: the peculiar temperament being given, the precise effect of this agent may be calculated beforehand.

Other medicines of a similar, though not identical nature, will produce other morbid states of the nervous system, which will concur in the creation of this particular influence: some illustrations of this fact have been given from the agency of belladonna, stramonium, hyosciamus, aconite, opium, &c.

But, if so, many phenomena usually ascribed to spiritual agency may be more correctly shown to be dependent upon a peculiar condition of the brain.

Nor is this extraordinary, since it is the appointed organ for the manifestation of mind; since it is subjected to the general laws of organic life; and since the curse of original sin has introduced disease and disorder of that organ, and associated with it all the sufferings of

all the other organs of the body : hence really every morbid change of organic function, or of mental manifestation, may be said to result from this fell influence.

The general histories of apparitions may be referred for their cause to cerebral irritation, arising from a morbid impression, primarily made either upon the mind or body.

Some accounts may be traced to the agency of superstitious influence impressed upon the mental organ in early childhood, and recalled in after life, with an unnatural degree of vividness.

The recollection of such impression is proportioned to its original intensity ; to the *attention* which it engaged at the time ; and to the number and interest of its subsequent associations. But, if so, early impressions are of the first consequence, because their intensity is proportioned to their novelty and freshness ; they insure the undivided attention ; and they operate upon unsophisticated mind, animated by the glowing desire of youthful sensation, and by an intense craving after excitement.

Besides, it is the nature of the organ upon which these impressions are made, that they do not weaken by the lapse of time, and by the

common effect of distance in diminishing influence; but that they re-appear with original, if not with augmented power, however long may have been the interval. For this reason, the brain *never* thoroughly supersedes the effect of early over-excitement; and by it, in fact, it is prepared for morbid trains of thought, and for the creation of unreal images of terror.

Cerebral irritation from bodily causes will likewise be another fruitful source of spiritual appearances; the brain will cease to be a perfect organ for mental manifestation; and in this state of imperfection it will continue to act on without the guidance of the presiding mind, and will produce images, which have usually been attributed to supernatural agency.

The most important of these cases are those in which there is a supposed appearance of departed spirits to distant friends, at the moment of their dissolution from the expiring body; and those which have been ascribed to the immediate *personal* intervention of the Deity.

In the former class, if the spirits thus appearing be *commissioned*, or even *permitted by Providence*, as a notice or warning of the death of certain individuals, the effect must be invariable; or it must form a portion of the govern-

ment of a Being of infinite and immutable truth; and therefore the whole hypothesis will be overturned by one such history of well-authenticated facts, in which the expected result did not occur. This argument is furnished by the narrative of the Rev. Joseph Wilkins, published in the *Record* of September 2, 1828.

Viewed as a consequence of cerebral irritation in two distant individuals, it is only an extraordinary coincidence; *it is possible*: but contemplated as the result of supernatural agency to produce a *false impression*, and at the same time one which was *painful and useless*, *it is impossible*.

The fallacy of the present instance being admitted, and the essential characters of the divine proceeding, namely, *truth and immutability*, being wanting, the effect cannot justly be ascribed to the agency of the Almighty.

Neither can it be referred to the influence of the evil spirit, because it wants that attribute of malignity, and that perversion of good, which must attach to demoniacal agency.

This view of the subject is supported by the failure of the expected result in the history of A. B.

The second position is illustrated by the narrative of the conversion of Colonel Gardiner.

This case was attended by a most powerful disturbance of the nervous system, and was followed by severe illness ; and according to the views of the present Essay, was produced by the approach of that malady, through a peculiar agency exerted upon the brainular system during the incubation of disease.

That the brain may be liable to illusory excitement, under such circumstances, is shown by the fact of the fallacious feeling of *high health*, which often precedes, scarcely by an interval of five minutes, all the miserable feelings of indigestion.

And if this acknowledged illusion be dependent upon so slight a disturbance of the general harmony of the system, it is not extraordinary that its more serious and threatening invasions should be preceded by the more deeply shadowed creations of a morbid brain.

That this state proved the means of convicting a sinner, of arresting him in his course, and of making him feel and acknowledge the great power of God, is not a fact opposed to the preceding argument ; because sickness, and especially that which should make a deep impression upon habitual associations, is precisely one of the most powerful means employed by Infinite Goodness, in its designs of wisdom and

mercy, to awaken the sinner to a sense of his miserable condition, in order that he might be enabled to appreciate the suitableness of the provided ransom.

Even affliction, induced by our own avoidable misconduct, is often the minister of good. Not that God can be the author of evil, or that *He* can employ evil in his service. But the wicked agents of their own desires and devices are permitted, in following their own wills, to bring about the designs of the Almighty, and are thus overruled to his glory.

So also, other powerful impressions upon the nervous system; nay, even insanity itself, has been frequently rendered instrumental in the conviction and conversion of the sinner.

Without, therefore, supposing any supernatural influence, we have a most rational explanation of this mystery; one which enlarges the heart, and fixes it upon the infinite goodness of God, instead of upon a very questionable agency, which has often been perverted to doubtful purposes.

Besides, a similar appearance has often happened, without its being followed by a corresponding result.

And if the Almighty had condescended to employ this extraordinary revelation in bringing

about his designs of mercy, it can scarcely be supposed that this would occur, without being followed by the alleged consequences. For, however under ordinary circumstances the sinner, in the hardness of his heart, may resist the striving of the Spirit, it cannot be allowed that this would have been the case where a miracle had been produced for this express purpose.

Yet some very similar cases have happened to the Atuhor, which were not followed by a similar consequence. Thus then the *Almighty* and *all-wise* Jehovah worked a miracle in vain!—or rather will not natural circumstances account for the physical origin of phenomena which, in the infinite mercy of God, were over-ruled to the everlasting benefit of the sinner?

But further; if these supernatural appearances be considered as the commissioned agents of the Omnipotent, to convince the hardened heart, it is impossible to resist the conclusion, that the same agency has been employed as a weapon against the spread of true religion in the world. Witness the revelation to the deistical Lord Herbert; a fact which rests on the same basis with all other analogous facts of an opposite tendency,—namely, human testimony.

No portion of the providence of God can be opposed to his holy will ; yet this event involves (if it be admitted) such a false conclusion ; consequently apparitions cannot be referred to spiritual agency without implicating the most alarming results : whereas, if they be ascribed to a bodily origin, although they may have been rendered a *means of grace*, and effectual in arresting the sinner in his downward course, all is comprehensible and complete ; and we contemplate the ways of God to man with largely expanded feelings of gratitude and joy.

The appearance of the dead or dying to their distant friends occurs during a disordered state of the brainular system, arising either from disease of body, or in the peculiar condition of that organ which results from intense mental emotion. In either case, there will be remarked a peculiar susceptibility to impressions of every kind, and a predisposition towards the indulgence of painful emotion.

And this is a *morbid state*, not of the immaterial, indestructible spirit, but of the organ through which its manifestations of action are made, its perceptions are received, and its impressions are conveyed : examples in proof

of these positions have been given in the foregoing pages.

By thus referring supposed spiritual agency to a purely bodily origin, I do not question or undervalue the *influence of the Holy Spirit* : my object is to vindicate this doctrine, to separate it from the adventitious states with which it has too frequently been associated ; and to distinguish between the former irregular effects of supernatural agency, and the latter constant holy influence.

This connexion of supernatural agency and unearthly visitants with bodily disease, has been clearly traced in many instances which have happened under the Author's own cognizance ; and enough surely has been adduced to establish the position, that disorder of the cerebral system *does* occasion that peculiar condition of the mental organ, during the continuance of which these apparitions are *sometimes* produced.

It is not asserted that this is the case in *every* instance ; or that there *can be no spiritual* appearance—but only thus : if these supernatural visitations may in any instance be satisfactorily accounted for on physical principles, who can deny the possibility of applying similar prin-

ciples to *all* cases? who is to define the distinctive limits between *sensorial illusion*, and spiritual supernatural agency?

Hence, it is better to yield assent to an hypothesis which explains many phenomena, and reconciles many difficulties, and vindicates the conduct of the righteous Governor of the universe; than to adopt another mode of argumentation which assumes every thing, but defines and explains nothing; which is involved in inextricable difficulty, which throws a cloud over the moral government of the Omnipotent, which is opposed to reason, and which is not sanctioned by experience.

The narrative of the appearance of Lord Tyrone to Lady Beresford has been examined on account of its absurdity in detail, and of its forming one of the best authenticated ghost stories on record; and it has been shown that this case falls strictly within the general rule, and did actually arise from morbid cerebral excitement. This is evinced by the nature of the symptoms, clearly indicating the existence of night-mare; by the want of truth and consistency in this narrative; by the absurd and impossible notions which it upholds; by the physical effects said to have been produced by this spiritual agency; and by the

alleged consequences of the visitation—consequences most easily accounted for by other natural causes.

The circumstances of the death of Lord Lytton have also been briefly examined by the same tests, and have been shown to be ascribable to similar physical causes.

It is indeed true, that some cases may be at present inexplicable upon this principle, and with our limited amount of knowledge; but even then, which is the wiser plan? to adopt a conclusion which does not admit of reasoning and explanation, or to embrace one which explains *much*, though it may fail of accounting for the *whole* of the phenomena?

CHAPTER XX.

Conclusions arising from a review of the whole subject.

WE must just notice the inferences which arise from reviewing this train of argumentation, and some consequences which flow from it.

The whole history of apparitions rests upon morbid brainular excitement, and, as far as the individual patient is concerned, is an *illusion*. The author of "Past Feelings Renovated" assumes, that "an apparition is that only which is susceptible of mental perception, and is not subject to corporeal proof; illusion being, on the contrary, a visual deception, or misconception of *material* objects; phantasms being the unreal fancies of the mind." And this is a very convenient process, because it assumes the reality of the point in question, and at the same time affirms that it is not subjected to

proof, thus furtively abstracting it from the province of reason. But suppose for a moment, that *every* apparition be not real, would not such exception to a general rule be classed as *illusion*? And since it is too much to affirm the reality of *every* history of supernatural appearance, there must be cases in which individuals deceive others, or are themselves deceived. In either case, illusion is produced; and where then are the defined boundaries of the apparition which is real, and that which is illusory? Again, why limit illusion to a misconception of *material* objects, when reason, experience, and religion, loudly proclaim, that, in the present state of his existence, man is subject to a variety of physical, intellectual, and moral illusions? The only answer that can be justly given to this inquiry, is, that it was convenient to get rid of the idea that an apparition might possibly be an *illusion*. Thus fails the fundamental position of the respected author of "Past Feelings Renovated."

If the present hypothesis will not account for all the well-authenticated histories of supernatural appearances, and spiritual communications; it will at least unravel very many, and would probably explain the remainder, if we were in possession of all the circumstances,

and if we were capable of detecting the almost infinitely varied *sophistications* of truth, which are the product of superstition. Thus at least it is reasonable to conclude, and to place the absence of complete explanation upon the failure of our intellectual powers, rather than upon the route of investigation which may have been adopted. But even supposing it granted that all these relations were ultimately inexplicable, still the attempt to find a *rationale* for them is loaded with fewer difficulties than that of establishing the *reality of apparitions*.

There is no ground for applying the admitted events of the *apostolic age* to the occurrences of the present period; because the former were *miraculous*, and produced for an *especial purpose*; and the period of miraculous interposition has been superseded by the ordinary operations of the Word, and Providence, and Spirit of God—namely, through the agency of appointed means.

But apparitions are justly classed as miracles, because they are deviations from the established course of nature: and the converse of this proposition can only be maintained by supposing, that all alleged spectral appearances really formed a portion of the common

course of events, established by Infinite Wisdom, at the creation of the world; which is again *assuming* the point in dispute, and which is rendered to the last degree improbable, because inconsistent with all that is known of the moral government of God.

The contrary opinion is not established by any supposed difference between our mental and corporeal natures, because these are so interwoven, that each is dependent upon the other, and the former cannot act without influencing the latter. We have this treasure in houses of clay; and if the material tenement be impaired, there will be no adequate manifestation of mind. It is absurd, therefore, to talk of an essential difference in our "*mental existence, and organic formation,*" when the first can only be demonstrated by the integrity of the latter, and is obscured, perverted, apparently lost, as soon as the organ ceases to be capable of correct mental manifestation.

The *possibility* of spectral appearances is not denied, but only its *probability*. Now in support of this probability, the value of human testimony has been weighed in the balance of reason and Christianity, and has been found wanting. And to plead the general and universally extended belief of every nation and

people in supernatural visitations (see “Past Feelings Renovated”), is *no* argument in its favour, since it might be claimed for idolatry, and for almost every error under the sun ; and to adduce the prevalence of error in its own support, is absolutely to assert that it diminishes in importance, in proportion to its extension ; or that it ceases to be injurious according to the multiplication of its *victims*.

This mode of argumentation is not chargeable with a sceptical tendency ; but, on the contrary, by separating truth from error ; by defining physical influence, and distinguishing it from spiritual agency ; and by placing the offspring of superstitious impression at an immeasurable distance from the operations of the Holy Spirit, and of the providence of God ; it tends to vindicate the moral Governor of the universe, and to fix our faith, and hope, and confidence, and love, on the only secure resting place for a conscious sinner.

The impossibility of accounting for some supernatural appearances is only the common lot of humanity, and is to be placed with many—nay with almost all nature’s secret operations—with the interior movement and immediate cause of which we are utterly unacquainted.

It has been shown that apparitions do arise out of the compound nature of our spiritual and material conformation, because their existence depends upon the irritation of the organ of mind from its own diseases; from sympathetic suffering, arising from the maladies of other functions of the body; or from the invasion of any important morbid action.

The position thus admitted is not at all in favour of the belief in a "permitted mental communication of our spiritual nature, with other spiritual existences," independently of, and excluding the medium, or agency, of the organic senses of materiality: in fact, their agency cannot be excluded, since mind has not possibly another medium of communication with external nature, *or with itself*; that is, with its *own manifestations*.

Credulity is not simply the error of contracted minds: it exists at both extremities of the scale of intellect, and will be found, under varying modifications, in the individual who is credulous, because he is unable to see and to comprehend and embrace many points of a subject; and in him who is conspicuous for his large measure of surpassing belief, because he looks down from an eminence on the immensity of the subject before him, and, from estimating

the small portion which he can thoroughly comprehend, gives the reins to imagination over that larger hidden territory which eludes the utmost grasp of finite mind.

Among these unknown portions of science, over which the darkness of ignorance broods, and the *ignis fatuus* of a lawless imagination delights to revel, is the function of the nervous system. Of this we know very little; and the discoveries of the last few years, with regard to the double function of nerves, and to the physiology of the respiratory nerves, are sufficient to prove that as yet we know very little. But this subject must be only just hinted at: we dare not now venture upon its more extended consideration; and we proceed, finally, to the moral conclusions to be drawn from the whole argument.

This disturbance of brainular function is no excuse for peevishness or impatience; as in itself it forms no proof of a want of interest in the atoning sacrifice of Christ, or of the absence of the transforming influence of the Holy Spirit.

But it is a constant, living proof of the debasing influence of sin, upon all the manifestations of mind.

Thus it forms a portion of that trial of the Christian's faith and patience, for which he is placed in the world; and it therefore teaches him to be watchful, and to pray, lest he enter into temptation; while the consciousness of its existence should lead him to the exertion of unwonted energy in his course, and should invite him to seek for strength where alone it can be truly found.

Man's *moral responsibility* rests on the fact of his *possessing* some mode of communication between *all* his organs and functions, and the supreme presiding Mind. The brain is subjected to the power of volition, and is therefore under the controul of the will: hence, for all its actions and promptings, and for all its associated sympathies, and for all its mental manifestations, man is minutely answerable.

From these considerations should arise a deep sentiment of gratitude to God, for the preservation of health, and, above all, for the integrity of the brainular function, and its mental manifestations; and thus will necessarily follow the devotion of every power to the love and service of the most high God; diligence and circumspection in the employment of every talent; and a firm resolution, in

the strength of the Lord God, to work while it is day, for "the night cometh when no man can work."

With this sentiment will be closely associated the principles of benevolence and compassion towards those who suffer from brainular irritation, and the associated morbid manifestations of mind.

The origin of cerebral irritation may often be traced to the influence of moral causes; and moral management will always be found useful in its treatment, because these means exert considerable influence over the *function* of the brain, and through it upon the irritated organ of mind.

Hence will follow the great importance of watchfulness and prayer, to be preserved from sin and its awful consequences; from those moral causes which may disturb the equilibrium of brainular function, and lead to the most fearful present results; and which, if unchanged, may conduct to the night of death, a night of the gloomiest hopelessness, and to a futurity of interminable misery.

How all-important, therefore, is religious principle, in preserving the mind from those causes which conduct to cerebral disorder!

The spiritual principle can be subject only to *one moral taint*, pervading all the manifestations of mind, producing the disorder of sinful action and passion, and thus necessarily disturbing the function of the brain.

For this spiritual disease a remedy has been provided. Man has not the inherent power of recovering himself from this state; he has nothing of his own to offer. But a ransom has been found, and a remedy has been applied. The Son of God has offered himself a sacrifice for sin; and his atoning blood cleanses from all iniquity. To this fountain sinners are invited to come, and, believing in him, to be saved, from the love, and power, and penalty of sin; and to find pardon, and peace, and holiness, and love, and joy.

By referring dreaming, nightmare, &c. to a peculiar condition of the material brain, we vindicate the honour of God, and we do not derogate from his power, or wisdom, or goodness.

If dreaming be produced by a bodily condition, the organ so disturbed may have been, and in fact has been, subjected to the perverting agency which accompanied the Fall; and thus it becomes a portion of the natural punish-

ment of sin, is actually a proof of its debasing influence, and forms a highly important part of the moral government of the world.

If dreaming were referred to the uninfluenced associations of the immaterial spirit, it would *follow* that it possesses very limited powers of intelligence; and,

That these require to be aided by the material connexions of the brain; results which experience contradicts, and which, if allowed, would terminate in materialism.

Man is not directly responsible for his *dreams*; but *he is awfully so* for any allowed trains of thought, for any indulgence of unhallowed passion, which may be revived during sleep, by an irritated brain, and which may present to the mind polluting images:—hence the great necessity for watchfulness, lest the enemy insidiously approach, and guilt be contracted, because Christian vigilance slumbered.

Against the disturbing effect of indigestion and brainular irritation, upon the common manifestations of mind, we are called upon to struggle; to “watch and pray,” lest we “enter into temptation.” This duty forms a portion of our daily trial, and it preserves the mind humble and dependent; determined, in

the strength of the Lord, to grapple with infirmity, and yet conscious, that it *is in his strength* alone we can ultimately come off more than conquerors, or produce fruit to the praise of the glory of his grace.

The best antidote against superstitious fear is to be found in the principle of quiet confidence in a superintending Providence; recollecting that nothing can hurt the children of God, except as permitted or commissioned by him to bring them back, if wanderers from his fold. Even the power of wicked men to harm us is limited by the designs of an all-wise, and gracious, and merciful Jehovah.

A lesson of humility may be drawn from our ignorance and helplessness, which so daily teach us the necessity for dependance on Christ for grace, and wisdom, and strength: from Him alone can they be obtained; but they must be diligently sought, and humbly prayed for, and perseveringly striven after.

It is most unequivocally admitted, that the Almighty Ruler over all can interfere with the laws of nature; and the proofs of his having done so, in evidence of his Divine mission, rest on the most unequivocal foundation; but then a particular purpose was to be accom-

plished,—a portion of the great scheme of redemption, the grand design of mercy and of love to fallen apostate man.

But these interferences appear to have been limited to certain portions of the history of the church in its early infancy.

And now that we have the sure word of God for our guide; and that the canon of Scripture is complete; and that woe is denounced against those who *add* to what has been revealed; and that there are appointed ministers and means of grace; miracles are no longer necessary, the voice of prophecy has ceased, the gift of tongues and the fervour of inspiration have given way to the ordinary operations of Divine grace,—by the teaching of the Spirit, by the written and preached word of God, by obedience, and prayer, and faith, and waiting upon *Him*, sincerely desirous of being led into all truth.

Dreams and visions are to be ranged in the same class of extraordinary communication: they have ceased with the peculiarities of the age which gave them birth; therefore they do not now form the rule for our guidance.

As well might we expect apostles gifted with superhuman powers, as that the Almighty would *now* employ dreams as the medium of spiritual communication: and as we would

treat the pretensions of the former, if assumed, with discredit, so no one at this hour of the Christian day should appeal to dreams as evidence of a communication from the Almighty and sovereign Disposer of all things.

There is no excuse for temptation to sin, on the ground of any extraordinary supernatural tempter. Temptation consists in the adaptation of circumstances to man's natural faculties, which have been debased by the Fall, having lost all their original purity and excellence, their likeness to the image of God ; and having become corrupt with a constant propensity to evil, which reigns in our mortal bodies, because the heart loves it, and fondly clasps the chain by which it is enthralled.

To this influence is to be added that of habit and association : the thoughts of the heart are only evil, and that continually.

But the heart must be renewed by Divine grace ; and there is implanted that living principle of hatred to sin, and love of holiness, which will produce a never-failing opposition to the influence of evil tendency, and to the suggestions of the Devil.

Thus, then, it is, that the gift of God is freely offered to all those who seek for his blessing : but this asking can only arise from good de-

sires ; and these good desires are not naturally found in the bosom, and can only spring from the influence of the Spirit of God ; but when once received into the heart, and implanted there, the will becomes changed, and the whole power of that function is to be devoted to the love and service of God.

It is no excuse that man is prone to corruption, and that he may be led into temptation ; because the sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit is a power superior to the voice of passion, or to any supposed agency of the evil spirit ; the Christian must be found struggling after holiness, and daily mortifying sin, so that he may grow in grace, live in obedience to Christ, and be found humbly, yet firmly, imitating his example. For a moment let it be recollected how powerful an exertion of the will, and what almost incredible efforts a man will make to save himself when his life is in danger : he does not then quietly wait the destructive agent till its force has become overwhelming, and escape impossible ; but he flees for his *life*. So when spiritual life is in danger, and enemies threaten, and temptations assail, and zeal is languid, and faith is feeble, the Christian is not only to wait upon God, but, by a powerful effort of the will, to save him-

self from danger—well knowing, that the strength of the Lord God, strength equal to his day, has been promised. But then, it is promised only to those who are found in the path of duty : in fact, exertion is to the Christian the appointed means of obtaining all his blessings.

A similar train of reasoning will apply to errors of judgment and opinion : these arise from the debasing change which has passed on man, which has quenched the light of life in his soul, and has most strangely perverted the manifestations of the organ of mind.

Man's duty, therefore, with regard to this source of fallacy in thought and action, is to receive with caution the notices conveyed by this perverted function ; to pray to be led into all truth, and to strive earnestly to redeem the time ; to resist the propensity to evil ; and to recover, as far as may be, that original perfection of the spiritual principle, in which our first parents were created, from which they fell by disobedience, and which we, their degenerate offspring, have perpetuated, by following the wayward imaginations of our unrenewed hearts.

By this view of the subject, man is not only rendered accountable for all his thoughts and

actions, but he is left without excuse if he neglect so great salvation ; if he obstinately refuse to receive Christ, and to obey his laws.

Thus is the voice of practical infidelity silenced : man is rendered responsible for the employment of his intellectual and affective faculties, for his preference of evil to good, and for his abuse or disuse of the talents entrusted to him : but he is not accountable for those actions and expressions which result from the continued operation of the brain, when from some change in its relations of health or disease, it has escaped the controul of the presiding spirit.

With what deeply-felt adoration and gratitude should the heart be raised to the Author of all our blessings, for the preservation of the brainular function from disorder !

The creation of apparitions depends upon primary or sympathetic irritation of the brain ; and is one of those evil consequences which flowed from the debasing influence of the Fall upon the organ appointed for the manifestations of mind, and upon those manifestations themselves.

How consoling is it to the Christian, that in all the difficulties arising from this perversion, he enjoys the comforting presence of the Holy

Spirit; and is refreshed and sustained by the recollection, that he has before the throne of God a great High Priest, Advocate, and Intercessor, who was partaker of his infirmities, yet without sin; and who has now entered within the veil, there to plead for the errors of his people.

In judging of death-bed scenes, it is necessary to recollect what a large admixture of *physical* influence is to be traced; and it must not be expected that the manifestations of mind should be perfect. When the sun is fast sinking from our view, the lengthened shadow first proclaims that we may not trust to this mode of judging of the correct outline of natural bodies: in a little time, a still greater uncertainty pervades the undefined forms of twilight, till they are presently shrouded from our view altogether by the deepening obscurity of night. So when the Christian's sun is setting on earth, its manifestations become imperfect—they lose the defined outline of health—and more or less of physical disorder involves the manifestations of mind in greater and deeper obscurity, till they are lost to us in the darkness of death. Granted that this is only a temporary abstraction of light, and that the Christian's sun is no sooner set on earth, than it rises in a more glorious and ever-

lasting day, where the sun shall no more go down. But *we see* not this change: it occurs in another hemisphere, of which we know only by faith and not by sight, and in which the Lamb is the light thereof. It is true, that sometimes the spiritual principle seems carried above the influence of physical causes; but this is rare, and usually depends on a state of physical exaltation. Errors on this subject arise commonly from looking at death as taking place in consequence of the soul quitting its material tenement. But this is a mistake; physical death occurs; and in consequence of this change, the body being no longer fitted for the manifestation of mind, the soul returns to God, who gave it. Now, therefore, where the brain is the *first organ* to die, the perfect action of that viscus will be early impaired, and the manifestations of mind will be perverted or destroyed: where a state of brainular excitement is present, they will be marked by an increased degree of intensity, amounting to exaltation of spiritual action: and where it is the *last* to die, it will happen that its function seems to be unimpaired, and to be quietly and perfectly continued, till positive death has extinguished the channel for the exhibition of its power.

Where there is so much scope for physical

influence, great caution should be observed in drawing any inferences from a man's last words.

Great care should be taken in early life not to excite the brain too much ; health, and strength, and peace of mind are often sacrificed at the shrine of parental vanity, in the desire after precocious talent for their children, and thus is produced a state favourable for the creation of apparitions of every shape.

The same may be said of powerfully excitant reading, especially of interesting fiction, adapted to infantile imagination ; when that active and uncontrollable faculty has been endeavouring to clothe ideal personages, with such a semblance of truth and nature, as that it shall be deceived into interest, on the several puppets before it,—but which, considered as puppets, would fail to interest beyond the earliest years. The mischief arising from the development of this faculty for unreal creation is incalculable ; and its impression is probably never lost ;—then it is revived in after life, and forms a groundwork for superstition, and for false notions of men and things, as well as for a feebleness and irritability of brain, which predispose that organ to morbid manifestation.

Great evil in this point of view arises in after-

life from the too great admixture of fiction in the reading of the young ; especially of the fashionable religious fictions of the day. Almost all the children's books are now little novels, and thus false views of real life are produced ; and, which is worse, an irritability of brain that is never effaced, and which, in one way or other, pursues its unconscious victim through life. The brain never loses the effect of these early impressions ; and a warning voice, against their increasing influence, is recorded as an act of duty to the present and the rising generation.

Enthusiasm is an evil infinitely less than theoretical or practical infidelity ; but still it is an evil, because it leads to the formation of erroneous views on the character and moral government of the divine Being ; and it excites a prejudice against both in the minds of those, who are *almost* persuaded to be Christians.

Finally : all our affairs are in the hands of an all-powerful, all-wise, and all-merciful Jehovah. It is only under the influence of true religion, and of the love of God shed abroad in the heart, that the mind can be at peace. Here is a counterpoise to the physical evils with which we are surrounded ; a soother amidst all the calamities of life, and the turmoils of society ; a hiding-place from the creations of fear ; a resto-

rative amidst the exhausting cravings of intellectual appetite, and the morbid manifestations which result from its indulgence : here alone is the only refuge from all the dreams, visions, voices, spectral appearances, and every other creation of distempered fancy : *there is repose in God ; “for so he giveth his beloved sleep.”*—May God in his infinite mercy grant that the preceding attempt may redound to the honour and glory of his holy name ; may it be blessed to the conviction and support of the feeble Christian ; and may the writer deeply and increasingly feel his own awful responsibility for the measure of talent entrusted to his care ; and may “he find mercy in that day !”

THE END.

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